

day, January 12, 1998

Italian women betrayed by foot rally cancelled

ROME (AFP) — Women abandoned Sunday by their fans, Italian footballers have their "women before football" rally cancelled.

Civil War ends granted dying

LONDON (AP) — A British soldier was killed in a battle in the north of the Democratic Republic of Congo on Sunday.

Israeli religious bans move pick on Sabbath

Jerusalem (AP) — A group of Israeli religious leaders announced Sunday that they would picket the opening of the new Knesset building on the Sabbath.

Rolling Stone frozen out of Montreal

MONTREAL (AP) — The Rolling Stone band was banned from performing at a concert in Montreal on Sunday.

Slater takes part in 'Hard Rain'

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Actor Kevin Costner will star in a new movie, "Hard Rain," which is set to be filmed in Las Vegas.

### Shots fired at Israeli patrol in Gaza — radio

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Gunshots hit an Israeli army jeep patrolling in the Gaza Strip Monday but none of the soldiers were wounded, Israel Radio reported. The shots were fired at the jeep as it travelled near the Jewish settlement bloc of Gush Katif along the coast in the south of the Gaza Strip, it said. The army searched the area and asked for the assistance of the Palestinian police in tracking down the assailant or assailants, the radio said. There was no immediate confirmation of the incident from either the Israeli army or Palestinian police. The reported attack followed warnings by Palestinian officials that the region was on the "brink of an explosion" following the failure of a U.S. mediation mission to revive Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

# Jordan Times

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## King, Vedrine review recent Mideast peace developments, bilateral relations

**By Tareq Ayyoub**  
*Special to the Jordan Times*

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein met on Monday with visiting French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine and reviewed with him recent developments in the Middle East peace process and the situation in Iraq.

The King expressed Jordan's appreciation of the role that the French and Europeans are playing to overcome the logjam in peacemaking between the Palestinians and Israelis.

Mr. Vedrine, who was on his second leg of a regional tour that took him to Lebanon, said that his visit was part of France's efforts to push the peace process ahead and remove all problems that impede resumption of peace talks.

Mr. Vedrine said that he was not proposing any new initiative but his visit was only of consultative nature.

He added that his country was coordinating with the Europeans and the United States in all efforts to bring



His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan meet with visiting French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine on Monday (Photo by Yousef 'Allan')

the peace process back on track.

The French minister, who met with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, signed with planning minister Rima Khalaf an 80 million French franc (FF) soft loan to Jordan.

Mr. Vedrine said that FF 40 million will be used to finance a water treatment project in northern Jordan while the remaining amount will be utilised for infrastructure projects in the Kingdom.

The FF 80 million, with 1 per cent interest rate and a grace period of seven years, is payable in 22 years.

Mr. Vedrine said in a press conference before he left for Damascus that his country was keen to enhance joint private sector ventures in Jordan.

The French minister urged Iraq to fully cooperate with the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) that monitors Baghdad's elimination of mass destruction weapons as a step to removing the seven-year-old sanctions imposed

## Weakened Netanyahu coalition survives censure motion

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government handily survived a parliamentary motion of no confidence Monday despite the defection of ex-foreign minister David Levy and four of his followers from the ruling coalition.

The actual vote on two censure motions submitted by the left-wing opposition was a tie — 54 to 54 — with two abstentions in the 120-member Knesset.

But the opposition fell far short of the 61 votes needed to topple the government under a 1995 law which introduced direct elections for the prime minister.

The vote was a reassuring sign for Mr. Netanyahu following weeks of political turmoil and ahead of his key talks over the troubled Palestinian peace process with U.S. President Bill Clinton on Jan. 20.

Mr. Levy and three other deputies from his centrist Geshar Party voted with the opposition for the censure motions. Four opposition deputies, five legislators from the governing coalition and one Geshar member were absent during the vote.

The departure of Mr. Levy, the cabinet's leading moderate on peace issues, stripped Mr. Netanyahu's majority to a bare minimum of one deputy and left him more beholden than ever to nationalist parties opposed to further territorial concessions to the Palestinians.

A dozen coalition deputies had threatened to vote against the government if Mr. Netanyahu gave into U.S. pressure to quickly carry out a "significant" troop pullback from the West Bank as required under signed peace accords.

A handful of remaining moderates in the government also threatened to bolt if Mr. Netanyahu failed to cede more land to Palestinian rule.

Mr. Netanyahu appeased the opposing groups over the past week by putting off a final decision on the pullback for several months.

Brushing aside U.S. and Palestinian objections, Mr. Netanyahu insisted he would only hand over more territory after a delay of five months and on condition the Palestinians meet a long list of demands, primarily involving the battle against Islamist activists.

Mr. Netanyahu has also reportedly decided to offer the Palestinians only six to eight per cent of the West Bank to add to the 27 per cent of the territory already under some degree of autonomy.

Washington is said to want a pullback from at least 12 per cent of the West Bank and the Palestinians want 30 per cent.

The issue is expected to come to a head when Mr. Netanyahu meets President Clinton and the U.S. president then hosts Palestinian President Yasser Arafat two days later.

Key government hardliners, notably in the right-wing National Religious Party which has nine deputies in parliament, are convinced Mr. Netanyahu will use alleged Palestinian non-compliance with the Israeli demands to avoid any troop withdrawal.

Many political analysts suggest Mr. Netanyahu is simply trying to delay an inevitable clash with the far-right over the peace process until later this year when he believes his chances will be better to win early elections.

According to this view, Mr. Netanyahu feels that he can easily beat the political left if the key issue in the elections is how to handle negotiations with the Palestinians — notably the next phase which is to determine the final status and borders of the Palestinian entity.

Mr. Netanyahu defeated incumbent Labour Prime Minister Shimon Peres in May 1996 by accusing the left of endangering Israel's long-term survival by giving up too much land to the Palestinians.

He promised to achieve "peace with security" and apparently thinks voters will believe him again.

## Iraq announces ban on 'unbalanced' arms inspection team starting today

### Clinton calls on Security Council to take 'strong, appropriate' action if Iraq should carry out ban

**Combined agency dispatches**

IRAQ ANNOUNCED Monday it would block any arms inspections by a team led by American Scott Ritter, a move that could set off a new confrontation with U.N. weapons inspectors.

The official Iraqi News Agency (INA) made the announcement, quoting an official spokesman who said the presence of too many American inspectors was prolonging the inspections programme and

delaying removal of U.N. sanctions on Iraq.

The agency's statement came after Mr. Ritter and a team of U.N. inspectors reportedly visited a hospital and a prison in Baghdad.

Apparently the team was not blocked since INA's report said the ban on Mr. Ritter would begin Tuesday, Jan. 13.

U.N. officials said Monday that the top U.N. weapons inspector for Iraq, Richard Butler, is writing to the U.N. Security Council with details of the latest Iraqi ban on his monitors.

A U.N. official told Agence France Presse that "Butler is sending a letter to the council. After that, it will be up to the council to decide what to do."

French diplomats said that there were no immediate plans to call a meeting of the 15-member Security Council on Monday. France currently holds the Security Council's rotating presidency.

U.N. chief, Kofi Annan, speaking at a news conference Monday, urged Iraq "not to do anything precipitous" pending the arrival of

## Ross proposes Arafat write letter cancelling PLO charter

TEL AVIV (AP) — A U.S. official proposed that Palestinian President Yasser Arafat write a letter forswearing clauses in the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) charter that call for Israel's destruction in order to alleviate Israel's concerns on the issue, an Israeli cabinet minister said Monday.

The proposal was made last week by U.S. envoy Dennis Ross, said Israeli Industry Minister Nathan Sharansky. But he said Israel insists the offending clauses be formally repudiated in the Palestinian legislature.

The Palestinian leader promised to cancel the clauses in September 1993, when Israel and the PLO signed a historic agreement, and in May 1996 he pushed

a decision through the Palestinian legislature declaring the calls for Israel's destruction were no longer in effect.

Israel's premier at the time, Shimon Peres, hailed that decision as one of the most important developments of the century. But Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who won elections a month later, says it was insufficient because it did not specify the clauses.

Mr. Sharansky told Israel TV that during his peace mission last week, Mr. Ross suggested President Arafat write a letter to Mr. Netanyahu and President Bill Clinton "specifying the clauses and saying that as of now they are cancelled."

But even this would not be enough, Mr. Sharansky said: "Another letter won't help."

A letter needs to be the beginning of a process that must lead to a vote in the Palestinian council.

Sufian Abu Zaide, President Arafat's adviser on relations with Israel, insisted the charter issue was taken care of. "If you say the [1996] decision was a show, then if we have another show you will be satisfied?" he asked Mr. Sharansky.

Some Israeli commentators believe Mr. Netanyahu — who once opposed the accords with the PLO and remains lukewarm about them — was using the charter issue as a pretext.

But Mr. Sharansky insisted that this was not so, and that fastidiousness was essential. "If it was so marginal, it would have been done [by the Palestinians] long ago," he said.

## 103 dead, 70 wounded in latest Algerian massacre — official

SID HAMED (AFP) — An armed group killed 103 people and wounded 70 others in an attack on this village near the Algerian capital, according to the first official toll for the massacre Monday.

A security forces communiqué described 10 of the 70 wounded as being in a serious condition.

Survivors at the scene said at least 120 people were slain in the massacre, while more bodies were still being pulled Monday morning from ruined houses in the village of Sidi Hamed where the killings took place the previous night.

Stressing that the massacre had been carried out by "a terrorist group," the official communiqué said the attack had begun with a home-made bomb blast in a cafe in the village, which "left several dead and injured."

It also said the death toll would have been far higher were it not for resistance by self-defence groups and the intervention of the security

## U.N. officials say they want to double value of Iraq's oil sales

BAGHDAD (Dow Jones) — The United Nations wants a rise of at least 100 per cent in the value of partial Iraqi oil sales during the current third phase which went into effect on Jan. 8, a senior U.N. official said Monday.

Denis Halliday, U.N. relief coordinator in Iraq, told Dow Jones that U.N. and Iraqi experts were reviewing the current oil-for-food programme which allows sales worth \$2 billion in six months to enable the government purchase food, medicine and other humanitarian supplies for its 22 million people.

Mr. Halliday said the discussions were to end this week and among the recommendations there will be a proposal to the U.N. Security Council to take a decision which will increase Iraqi revenues by 100 per cent or even more.

Mr. Halliday said the boost was needed to rehabilitate Iraq's drinking water facilities and upgrade the power grid.

He said he would be forwarding the recommendations to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan who is expected to put them before the Security Council at the end of January for approval.

Mr. Halliday has said the current programme has done very little to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqis under the U.N. trade sanctions imposed for Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Mr. Halliday said he was optimistic the Security Council would approve the recommendations.

If approved Iraq will pump about 1.6 million barrels per day (bpd) into an already glutted oil market by February. Under the current programme Iraq plans to pump 800,000 bpd.

The exact volume of Iraqi exports will eventually be determined by prices prevalent on the international markets but lower prices will mean a further increase in Iraqi exports.

## 5 Iraqi nationals confess to planning attack on Iraqi diplomat — minister

**By Tareq Ayyoub**  
*Special to the Jordan Times*

AMMAN — The authorities on Monday said they are holding five Iraqi nationals who confessed to masterminding an attack on Iraq's commercial attaché in Amman, Rahim Taher, earlier this month.

Acting Minister of Interior Tawfiq Kreishan said that the five "confessed that they have planned the attack" in which one hullet was fired at Mr. Taher while starting his car on the morning of Jan. 3, in front of his house in Unm Utheina.

Mr. Kreishan said that attack was prompted by "family and financial disputes."

"The interrogation is over and the case will be sent to the Criminal Court," Mr. Kreishan told the Jordan Times.

He denied that the incident had a political dimension adding that it was "purely criminal."

The minister declined to reveal the names of the five implicated in the case but said that "all belong to one family."

The minister said that all suspects arrived from Iraq before the attack.

Mr. Kreishan denied a report by an Amman-based news agency that one of those implicated in the attack enjoys diplomatic immunity.

Quoting a judicial source, the agency had reported that one of the Iraqis involved in the assassination attempt was covered by diplomatic immunity.

Iraqi Ambassador in Amman Nouri Al Weiss also denied the agency's report describing it as "inaccurate."

"There is no Iraqi diplomat involved in the attack, this is a baseless piece of information," said Mr. Weiss.

The ambassador told the Jordan Times that he had not received any information from the Jordanian authorities on the outcome of the investigation.

One of the Iraqis arrested shot at the diplomat and the weapon used was found in his possession. A second Iraqi drove the car while the other two did the logistics in preparation for the attacks, the news agency quoted its sources as saying.

Emad Keilani, a prosecutor at the Criminal Court, said that the case has not reached the court yet.

### Two dead in military plane crash in France

NIMES (AFP) — Two people were killed and two others were injured Sunday when a French military plane crashed near a road in southeast France, officials said. One of those killed was a soldier inside the single-engine Alize plane while the other was a civilian who was driving a car near the site of the crash. Rescue workers said they were unable to say whether the car, which was found in a nearby ditch, had been hit by the plane or whether the driver lost control. The two injured were travelling in the plane, which came down as it prepared to land at the Nimes-Garons air base.

(Continued on page 7)



## Hizbollah dismisses Israeli withdrawal offer

BEIRUT (AP) — The leader of Hizbollah dismissed Sunday an Israeli offer to withdraw its soldiers from southern Lebanon in return for security guarantees.

Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah said there would be "no negotiations with the enemy and no discussion of plans or arrangements or security guarantees."

"What concerns the Islamic resistance is the unconditional withdrawal of the enemy from our land and certainly without prizes and rewards," he said, speaking at a ceremony in his honour in eastern Lebanon's Bekaa Valley.

Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai has said that Israel was willing to withdraw its soldiers from Lebanon if the security of its northern border was guaranteed.

Lebanese leaders have been sceptical of the Israeli offer, with some saying it could be an attempt to drive a wedge between Lebanon and Syria, which maintains 35,000 soldiers in Lebanon and is the main power broker there.

Israel says Syria has used southern Lebanon as a bargaining chip in peace talks over the Golan Heights, which Israel occupied in

1967. Peace between Lebanon and Israel could weaken Syria's negotiating position.

Public pressure has been increasing on the Israeli government to end its military occupation of southern Lebanon because of mounting Israeli casualties.

Some 200 Israeli soldiers have been killed fighting Hizbollah and other guerrillas since 1985, when Israel created a "security" zone in southern Lebanon to protect its northern territories from cross-border raids. The border strip is patrolled by 1,500 Israeli soldiers and 2,500 allied militiamen.

## Iran hotly debates Khatami's regrets for U.S. embassy hostage taking

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian President Mohammad Khatami's remark to the American people that he "regrets" the 1979 hostage-taking at the U.S. embassy in Tehran sparked passionate public debate in Iran's press Monday.

Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards (Pasdaran) rushed to defend the hostage-taking in a statement sent to scores of papers praising the action which resulted in the severing of Iranian-U.S. diplomatic relations.

"The Iranian people have not forgotten that the American embassy in Tehran was the command centre for plots against Islamic revolution," it said.

The Jumburi-Islam newspaper called on supporters of the Iranian president, who held an unprecedented interview with U.S.-based television network CNN

last week, to press him to "correct his errors."

But the moderate daily Iran News congratulated President Khatami for success in "portraying the Iranian revolution in a humane and subtle way."

At the same time, the Iran News acknowledged that "Khatami's unprecedented move in presenting an address to the American people was a serious political shock to Iran's anti-American front."

In the hostage-taking, 52 U.S. embassy staff members were held captive for 444 days, causing Washington and Tehran to break off diplomatic relations in April 1980.

The seizure of the diplomats, carried out by a group calling itself "students following the line" of Iran's revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini,

marked a radicalisation of the Islamist revolution 10 months after the overthrow of the Shah's pro-American regime.

In the CNN interview President Khatami expressed "regrets" for "hurting the feelings" of Americans during the hostage-taking. He marked a sharp break with 19 years of official anti-American rhetoric by also calling for "a dialogue with the great people of the United States."

The anniversary of the hostage-taking continues to be celebrated yearly in Iran with anti-American protests including the burning of American flags and children in schools around the country stopping their lessons to shout "Down with America!"

## Two Islamists sentenced to hard labour for anti-Coptic attacks

ASWAN (AFP) — An Egyptian court on Monday sentenced two Islamists to five years in prison at hard labour for plotting attacks on property owned by Coptic Christians in southern Egypt.

Ahmad Mahmoud Abdul Fatah and Shazli Mahmoud Ali Mahdi were accused by the Aswan Assize court of inciting two minors to set fire to five houses and shops and to two cars owned by Copts, legal sources said.

The attacks took place in the village of Kom Ombo 40 kilometres north of Aswan between July 1992 and June 1993, the sources said.

Copts officially number 3.5 million out of the country's population of 62 million and have occasionally been the target of Islamist attacks.

## Iran signals its not ready for congressman's visit

TEHRAN (AP) — An Iranian official signalled on Monday that his country is not yet ready to receive a visitor from the U.S. Congress.

Mahmoud Mohammadi, spokesman for the foreign ministry, was quoted by state-run Tehran Radio as saying that Iran has no plans for a visit by U.S. Rep. Tom Lantos.

Mr. Mohammadi said Mr. Lantos had expressed "a personal interest" in visiting Tehran.

Efforts to determine if Mr. Mohammadi's statement constituted a formal rejection of Mr. Lantos' request were unsuccessful.

Mr. Lantos, a nine-term California Democrat, wrote to Iranian President Mohammad Khatami last week, saying he was interested in visiting Tehran to see whether

there was a basis for improving U.S.-Iranian relations.

Mr. Lantos sent his request a day after the American CNN aired an interview with President Mohammad Khatami in which he called for cultural exchanges with the United States. But Mr. Khatami stopped short of urging an official dialogue.

It was the first time an Iranian leader had reached out to America since the Islamist revolution in 1979.

Ties between Tehran and Washington were broken after the revolution, and there has been only limited political contact since. Most government-to-government contacts have occurred through the Swiss. Mr. Lantos, who is a member of the house international relations committee, last visited Iran as a university professor in 1978.

## Israel arrests several Palestinians amid security alert

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Israeli security forces have arrested several Palestinians suspected of planning bombings in Israel as the country remained on high alert for feared attacks during the Holy Month of Ramadan, police said Monday.

Police Minister Avigdor Kahalani revealed that several Palestinians had been arrested in recent days but declined to provide further details due to continuing investigations.

Police said Monday that the suspects were picked up in areas of the West Bank as a result of information extracted from members of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) who were detained earlier.

Sunday, Israel's supreme court rejected a demand that security services be ordered to stop using physical pressure against two Hamas suspects under interrogation in a Jerusalem police station.

Mr. Kahalani said police had information about plans by Islamist activists to attempt to carry out attacks similar to two suicide bombings in Jerusalem in July and

September that killed 21 Israelis.

He declined to elaborate, but the Haaretz newspaper Monday said the security alert was not the result of precise intelligence of a planned attack but rather general reports of preparations by Islamist groups to strike during Ramadan.

Hundreds of extra police have been deployed in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and other main cities, beefing up patrols in markets, shopping malls, bus stations and other public places.

Security remained tight Monday despite a thick blanket of snow which fell on Jerusalem and most of the West Bank overnight, blocking roads and keeping markets, bus stations and other outdoor businesses closed for most of the morning.

In addition to concerns over the tendency of Hamas or Islamic Jihad group to attempt anti-Israeli attacks during Ramadan, tensions have been mounting due to the deadlock in Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts.

The Palestinian leadership warned over the weekend that the region was "on the



Palestinian women hold photographs of their sons during a protest in front of the headquarters of the International Committee of the Red Cross in the Gaza Strip calling on Israel to free their sons who are held as political prisoners in Israeli jails, Monday. Palestinian officials said 1,500 Palestinians were arrested since the Oslo peace accords and more than 3,000 Palestinians remained in Israeli jails (Reuters photo)

brink of an explosion" over Israel's refusal to carry out promised troop withdrawals from the West Bank and the continuation of building in Jewish settlements in occupied areas.

Palestinian frustration rose after U.S. special envoy Dennis Ross failed during a four-day mission last week to achieve any progress towards breaking the deadlock.

Palestinian leaders warned that separate meetings scheduled later this month between U.S. President Bill Clinton, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu were a last chance to revive the peace process.

## Turkey seeks to buy F-15 fighters in retaliation to Greece — report

ANKARA (AFP) — The Turkish air force is seeking to buy 40 U.S.-made F-15 fighter aircraft in response to a Greek decision to purchase similar sophisticated warplanes, a newspaper reported Monday.

The military has already informed the U.S. Defence Department of its intention and is seeking a marketing license from Washington, the English-language Turkish Daily News said.

If approved by the United States, the sale would cost some \$2 billion.

The F-15 Eagle, produced by Boeing, is an extremely manoeuvrable tactical fighter designed to gain and maintain air superiority in aerial combat. Its performance was rated highly during the 1991 Gulf war.

"We don't think that we will face any difficulty from the U.S. administration in obtaining permission for this sale as a preliminary approval has already been given for Greece," a Turkish general told the newspaper.

Turkey's move follows a Greek decision to buy dozens of sophisticated fighter aircraft.

Defence analysts said the Turkish military, whose fighters currently outnumber the Greek ones, fear that it will lose its air force superiority over the disputed Aegean Sea in the event Athens acquires the F-15.

The U.S. State Department announced last month that it had given Boeing permission to market the F-15 to Greece,

but that this was not a final sale decision.

"If the Greek government were to select an American aircraft for purchase, then the State Department would have to decide at that time whether to authorise such a sale," department spokesman James Foley said on Dec. 8.

Under U.S. law, the State Department plus Congress must ratify any large scale defence equipment export.

Mr. Foley said it remained unclear whether the sale would have an impact on stability in the Aegean where arch-rivals Greece and Turkey — also two NATO allies — came to the brink of war in January 1996 over a handful of uninhabited islets.

"We have to weigh the impact in the Aegean, that we contribute to stability, not to the reverse, in any such decision," Mr. Foley said.

State Department officials said the marketing license "usually carries a presumption of approval" but noted that several conditions could be attached to any future sale of the aircraft.

Apart from the F-15, Greece is also weighing other options, including the U.S.-made F-16 and French and Russian aircraft. Under an agreement with the U.S. Lockheed Martin, Turkey is co-producing for its air force 230 F-16 fighters.

Although it is one of the best fighters in the world, the F-16, that costs some \$20 million a piece, is inferior to the F-15 which has a unit price of \$30 million.

## EU accused of overreaction to Kurdish refugee influx

BRUSSELS (AFP) — European Union governments were accused Monday of encouraging xenophobia by over-reacting to the recent arrival in Italy of some 3,000 Kurds seeking refuge in western Europe.

Suggestions that the EU needs to step up external border controls in the face of an "uncontrollable flow" of migrants from Iraq and Turkey, are "misleading and dangerous," said Peer Banke, the General Secretary of the European Council on Refugees and Exiles.

"Responsible governments should rectify such distortions, not encourage xenophobia."

The intervention by ECRE, the umbrella group for refugee organisations in the 15 EU states, follows a round of talks among EU governments last week aimed at stepping up border controls and police cooperation in reaction to the Kurds' arrival.

Mr. Banke said this kind of response was disproportionate to the relatively small number of people involved and carried a risk that individuals fleeing persecution could, in the future, be prevented from reaching Europe.

The ECRE underlined that the Kurds were fleeing from areas of Turkey and Iraq where there was consistent evidence of human rights abuses, making it incumbent on EU governments to admit them and consider their asylum applications.

"Under no circumstances should an asylum-seeker be returned to a country where they risk human rights abuses," Mr. Banke said.

## Chelsea Clinton orders a copy of a guide to the Koran

TEHRAN (AFP) — A copy of a book explaining the Koran is winging its way to U.S. President Bill Clinton's daughter Chelsea from Iran.

The chairman of a Shiite Muslim religious research centre in Iran said Chelsea Clinton had requested an English version of the Koran guide which was now being sent to the White House, the Tehran Times reported on Monday. The report comes just days after Iranian President Mohammed Khatami held an unprecedented interview with U.S.-based television network CNN in which he called for a dialogue between their peoples and greater cultural exchanges.

## Child labour on the rise in Syria — report

DAMASCUS (AFP) — The number of Syrian children who go out to work has risen to one in every 10, according to a report published Monday which said however that the problem was not a cause for concern.

A total of 216,692 children or 10.5 per cent of the under-15 population and 4.7 per cent of the Syrian workforce in 1995 are employed but many don't earn a cent, according to a report by the Syrian social affairs and labour ministry.

The figure compares with 130,000 children or 3.3 per cent of the workforce in 1993, said the report, published in the official Tishrin newspaper. More than half of the children work in the agriculture sector with their parents but

are not paid, said the report, which was compiled in collaboration with the International Labour Organisation.

"The report said the problem of child labour in Syria was not a cause for concern, and that Syria regards children's issues as important and has passed several laws to protect them," Tishrin said.

The report said that 45 per cent of Syria's population — estimated at 13.8 million in 1994 — was under the age of 18.

Syrian law prohibits children under 12 from working, no matter what the nature of the work and conditions, the report said, adding that primary education was "compulsory and free."

## JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

### PROGRAMME TWO

14:10 .....Sondakan  
14:30 .....French Programmes  
16:15 .....Prayers  
16:30 .....Believe and Behave  
17:00 .....Skiptip  
17:30 .....Square One TV  
18:00 .....Gillette Sports  
18:30 .....News Headlines  
18:35 .....A Whole New Ballgame  
19:00 .....News in French  
19:15 .....Ramadan Talks  
19:35 .....Black Hat Chef  
20:00 .....What Would You Do?  
20:30 .....Encounter  
21:10 .....Hollywood Remembers  
22:00 .....News in English  
22:30 .....Marguerite Volant  
23:15 .....Feature film: Three Fugitives  
23:59 .....Islam in a Changing World

### PRAYER TIMES

05:11 .....Fajr  
06:32 .....Sunrise/Duha  
11:44 .....Dhuhr  
14:33 .....Asr  
16:56 .....Maghreb  
18:18 .....Isha

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church  
Sweith, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church  
Tel. 632785  
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634590  
Church of the Annunciation  
Tel. 637440  
De la Salle Church Tel.  
661757  
Terra Sancta Church Tel.  
622366  
Anglican Church Tel. 652826  
Armenian Catholic Church  
Tel. 771331  
Armenian Orthodox Church  
Tel. 775261  
St. Ephraim Church Tel.  
771751  
Amman International Church  
Tel. 865897  
Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Tel. 824328  
German-speaking Evangelical  
Congregation Tel. 845457  
The Latter-Day Saints Tel.  
654932  
Church of Nazareth Tel.  
675691  
The Evangelical Local Church  
in Amman Tel. 811295  
English-speaking  
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.  
614190

### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Stable weather conditions will prevail with temperatures rising gradually. Skies will be partly cloudy, there will be a chance of scattered showers in the morning, and winds northwesterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy, winds northerly moderate to active, and seas calm.

Amman .....1/7  
Aqaba .....07/15  
Deserts .....-3/8  
Jordan Valley .....06/14

Yesterday's high temperatures:  
Amman 03, Aqaba 13 Humidity readings: Amman 88 per cent, Aqaba 56 per cent.

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY  
AMMAN:  
Dr. Ghaleb Zawaideh .....736011  
Dr. Tawfiq Qub'ain .....623029  
Dr. Hisham Kan'an .....790286  
Dr. Khalidun Asfour .....694440  
Ferdows pharmacy .....778336

Al Asema pharmacy .....637055  
Al Salam pharmacy .....636730  
Yacoub pharmacy .....644945  
Shmeisani pharmacy .....637660  
Naioukh pharmacy .....623672  
IRBID:  
Dr. Fawzi Abul Hajja .....252970  
Dr. Akram Haddad .....985550  
Khalifeh pharmacy .....985417

### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre .....637111  
Civil Defence Dept .....661111  
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue .....630341  
Civil Defence Emergency .....199  
Rescue Police 192 621111, 637777  
Fire Brigade .....617101  
Blood Bank .....775121  
Highway Police .....843402  
Traffic Police .....896390  
Public Security Department .....630321  
Hotel Complaints .....605800  
Price Complaints .....661176  
Water and Sewerage Complaints .....897467  
Amman Municipality Complaints .....787111  
Telephone Information (direct assistance) .....121

Overseas Calls .....010230  
Central Amman Telephone Repairs .....632101  
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101  
Jordan Television .....773111  
Radio Jordan .....774111  
Water Authority .....680100  
Jordan Electricity Authority .....815615  
Electric Power Company 636381  
RJ Flight Information 0853200  
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

### HOSPITALS

AMMAN:  
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32  
Khalidi Maternity .....644381/6  
Akileh Maternity .....642441/2  
Jabal Amman Maternity .....642362  
Malhas, J. Amman .....636140  
Palestine, Shmeisani .....607071  
Shmeisani Hospital .....669131  
University Hospital .....845845  
Al-Muasher Hospital 6672279  
The Islamic Abdali 666126/37  
Al-Ahli, Abdali .....664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3  
Al-Bashir .....775111/26  
Army, Marka .....891611/5  
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50  
Amal Hospital .....674155  
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery .....865199  
ZARQA:  
Zarqa Govt. Hospital 09983323  
Zarqa National Hospital .....09900560  
Ibn Sina Hospital .....09986732  
Al Hikma Modern Hospital .....09990990  
IRBID:  
Princess Basma Hospital .....02275555  
Greek Catholic Hospital .....02272275  
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital .....02247100

### FOR THE TRAVELLER

#### QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

#### ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights  
07:15 .....Sanaa (RJ)  
09:25 .....Abu Dhabi (RJ)  
10:05 .....Muscat, Dubai (RJ)  
10:05 .....Beirut (RJ)

11:25 .....Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)  
12:00 .....Geneva, Madrid (RJ)  
12:00 .....Brussels, Paris (RJ)  
12:15 .....London (RJ)  
12:30 .....Aqaba, Cairo (RJ)  
19:30 .....Jeddah (RJ)  
20:20 .....Lamaca (RJ)  
21:00 .....Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)  
23:00 .....Jeddah (RJ)

#### Other Flights

14:35 .....Istanbul (TK)  
14:40 .....Munich (YP)  
16:30 .....Rome (AZ)  
18:30 .....Dubai, Damascus (EK)  
20:00 .....Tel Aviv (LY)  
20:10 .....Beirut (ME)  
20:40 .....Cairo (MS)  
22:20 .....London (BA)  
23:35 .....Amsterdam (KL)  
23:35 .....Lamaca (CY)

#### Royal Wings (RW) Flights

07:45 .....Aqaba (RW)  
09:05 .....Amman (QAIA) (RW)  
09:50 .....Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)  
17:20 .....Tel Aviv (RW)  
18:30 .....Amman (QAIA) (RW)  
21:20 .....Aqaba (RW)  
22:50 .....Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)

#### DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights  
06:20 .....Beirut (RJ)  
08:25 .....Amsterdam, New York (RJ)

11:25 .....Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)  
12:00 .....Geneva, Madrid (RJ)  
12:00 .....Brussels, Paris (RJ)  
12:15 .....London (RJ)  
12:30 .....Aqaba, Cairo (RJ)  
19:30 .....Jeddah (RJ)  
20:20 .....Lamaca (RJ)  
21:00 .....Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)  
23:00 .....Jeddah (RJ)

#### Other Flights

02:25 .....Amsterdam (KL)  
03:00 .....Athens (OA)  
15:40 .....Munich (YP)  
15:45 .....Istanbul (TK)  
17:30 .....Rome (AZ)  
19:30 .....Dubai (EK)  
21:20 .....Tel Aviv (LY)  
21:40 .....Cairo (MS)

#### Royal Wings (RW) Flights

06:45 .....Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)  
08:15 .....Aqaba (RW)  
09:30 .....Amman (QAIA) (RW)  
17:45 .....Amman (Marka Airport) (RW)  
17:55 .....Tel Aviv (RW)  
20:30 .....Amman (QAIA) (RW)  
21:50 .....Aqaba (RW)



## 3

"The human rights record for Jordan is positive in many respects," stated Mr. Lissner, explaining that the UNDP will be looking at means of enhancing this record through constructive solutions pertaining to issues such as freedom of speech and freedom of the press.



## One dead, another missing as floods hit north Australia

TOWNSVILLE, Australia (AFP) — At least one man died and another was missing Monday as emergency workers mopped up after the worst flooding to hit this northern Australian city in almost 30 years.

As Townsville was declared a disaster area, Canberra offered to pay up to three quarters of the damage bill running into many millions of dollars following a weekend of devastation caused by the tailend of tropical cyclone Sid.

More than 120 people were evacuated from their homes and 60 tourists taken from nearby Magnetic Island resort as it was struck by a mudslide at the height of the storms that lashed the north-east coast.

Police said the confirmed death was of a wheelchair-

bound man trapped inside his car when it was swept off a flooded bridge into a stormwater drain.

Another man miraculously survived unscathed after being swept six kilometres through a stormwater drain.

A third man, aged 28, was feared drowned after he disappeared in the churning floodwaters of a river north of here.

About 16 other people reported missing were accounted for in the Townsville area on Australia's east coast 1,200 kilometres north of Brisbane.

The tourists, many from Europe on a snorkelling holiday, were brought eight kilometres to the mainland after the mudslide demolished a wing of the island's International Resort.

Flooding caused landslides and rockfalls, cutting road and rail links and left 20,000 people without electricity while other services, including water and telecommunications, were also affected. The airport was reopened on Monday but the city remained without train services.

Police spokesman Sergeant Brian Perry said people were expected to return to their homes to begin the clean-up later Monday, adding: "The floodwaters have receded quite substantially overnight."

The weather bureau said almost 700 millimetres of rain had been dumped, giving Townsville half its normal annual rainfall and its highest recorded downpour in history.

Meanwhile, tropical cyclone Katrina, rated a "severe" category three on a scale of one to five, was 1,600 kilometres from the coast, near the Solomon Islands and moving slowly north-westwards towards Papua New Guinea.

Before leaving for Townsville to inspect the devastation, acting Prime Minister Tim Fischer praised the work of local rescuers and armed forces personnel who deployed high-wheeled vehicles and helicopters in the rescue.

Under national disaster relief arrangements, Canberra will pay half the cost if the bill reaches 29.5 million Australian dollars (\$18.8 million) and 75 per cent if it exceeds \$50 million.



Angry Shiite protesters burn furniture in a Lahore street following an attack by unidentified gunmen who massacred at least 22 Shiite Muslims (Reuters photo)

## Pakistani mob rampage to protest Lahore slayings

LAHORE (AFP) — Hundreds of protesters went on the rampage here Monday, torching a cinema, attacking a court and trying to storm a government building before the mass burial of Shiite Muslims massacred in a graveyard, police said.

A total of 23 people belonging to the minority Shiite sect were gunned down Sunday when three unidentified assailants opened fire during a religious ceremony at Lahore's Mominpur graveyard.

There was tight security across the troubled city Monday, with 18,000 police manning security roadblocks, witnesses said. And 21 people were arrested in a police sweep overnight.

Sources said 10 coffins had already reached the city's Nasir Bagh ground Monday where the funeral was scheduled later in the afternoon.

Sources in the Shiite Tehreek-i-Jaffia Pakistan (TJP) party said four more coffins were due later while the remaining bodies had been transported for burial to their hometowns.

As protesters marched through the town, a group of about 250 became violent, throwing stones at police and firing shots in the air. They also set fire to a cinema and part of the district court, witnesses said.

The rampaging crowd then headed towards the main secretariat building housing the top bureaucracy

and ministerial offices of the Punjab provincial government.

Witnesses said they broke open the main gate but police foiled the attempt.

Officials said police had been ordered to take the necessary action to restore order.

An underground Sunni extremist group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi has claimed the responsibility for the attack, newspaper reports said Monday.

The group's founder Riaz Basra in telephone message published in local daily Jang and The News said the attack on a Shiite gathering was in "retaliation" for previous killings in Sunni mosques.

Police tightened security in Lahore where main markets and commercial centres were closed in protest at the massacre, local officials said.

Large numbers of police blocked roads at key intersections and stepped up street patrols ahead of funeral prayers to be held at the Nasir Bagh ground.

Sources said slogan-chanting youths demanding the arrest of the killers, pelted vehicles with stones. They said the jeep used by assailants in the drive-by shooting had been found abandoned in the city late Sunday. The vehicle had a fake number plate.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif hinted at the involvement of foreigners in the Lahore killings, one of the

worst cases of sectarian violence in the country's history, but he did not identify the country by name.

TJP leaders suspect the involvement of the Sunni militant group Sipah-e-Sahab Pakistan (SSP). Sajid Naqvi chief of the TJP, a political ally of Mr. Sharif's, told a news conference that foreign agents could also be involved.

Lahore's police chief Zulfikar Ali Cheema said 21 people detained on suspicion of involvement were all SSP activists or members of its splinter group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi which has gone underground.

Security was tightened in other key Pakistani cities also amid fears of sectarian violence after the Lahore massacre, sources said.

Police said raids had also been conducted in other cities but they could not give the exact number of people detained.

Mr. Basra added in the newspaper reports that the massacre was also in retaliation for the death of Qari Allah Wasaya, an activist in his group, in police custody last week.

The newspapers quoted Mr. Basra repeating demands for the release of a key Lashkar leader Malik Ishaq.

Mr. Ishaq, whose head carried an award of \$50,000, was arrested in the city of Faisalabad in Punjab province in September on charges of involvement in several terrorist attacks.

## Taleban publicly execute assassin in southern Afghanistan

KABUL (AFP) — A man accused of murdering four people and attempting to assassinate a Taleban commander has been executed in the southern Afghan stronghold of the hardline militia, state-run radio announced Monday.

"A group of saboteurs had fired at Mullah Nagibullah ... injuring him and killing four of his companions," the Taleban mouthpiece reported.

"Fazl Mohammad was captured by the security forces and after interrogation the murderer confessed his crime."

The report said following a verdict of "Qisas" (revenge) and with the approval of the Taleban's Kandahar-based leader Mullah Mohammad Omar, the man was publicly executed.

It said following further investigations another alleged member of the gang has also been arrested.

Radio Shariat did not reveal the method of execution, but in the past the Taleban have favoured either hanging or the gunning down of a culprit with machine gun fire.

The public execution is the first to be announced so far this year by the hardline Muslim militia, who control around two thirds of Afghanistan including the capital Kabul.

In 1997 the radio station announced 18 executions, four forced amputations and hundreds of beatings dealt out to men accused of trimming their beards or women considered to be improperly covered.

## African disease kills 21 more Kenyans

NAIROBI (AP) — A disease outbreak already believed to be responsible for deaths of more than 300 Kenyans, has claimed 21 more lives in northeastern Kenya, medical authorities said Monday.

Rift Valley Fever is spread by mosquitoes, sand flies and the slaughter of infected animals. It causes high fevers, severe headaches and vision problems, and in severe cases, fatal haemorrhaging from the nose and other orifices.

A Red Cross official in the region urged residents to burn all animal carcasses, saying most of the recent victims got the virus from handling ailing livestock.

Residents and livestock shared water from the same dams in Shimbirey, 320 kilometres northeast of Nairobi, Dr. Saade Abdalla said.

In addition, severe flooding in northeastern Kenya has widely scattered eggs laid by the mosquitoes at the edges of rivers.

There is no treatment for Rift Valley Fever, but patients benefit from rehydration and nourishment.

The region's impoverished population is malnourished, under-treated and ravaged by many diseases, especially those spread by a lack of clean water.

The virus, endemic to Africa, was first isolated in 1931 during an outbreak in livestock on a farm in Kenya's Rift Valley. It causes spontaneous miscarriages in ewes and cows.

Across the border in Somalia, dozens of people also died recently from Rift Valley Fever. Exact figures were not available.

Tests were continuing at the U.S. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta and the National Institute of Virology in South Africa to determine whether Rift Valley Fever also was to blame for the deaths of hundreds of sheep, goats and camels.

## Family of slain leftist leader seeks charges against military officers

MANILA (AFP) — The family of a slain leftist leader said Monday they want charges laid against 20 Philippine military officers and soldiers in connection with the unsolved 1986 murder.

Lawyers for the family of the slain leader, Rolando Olalia cited the emergence of a new witness against the military men.

The new witness, a former soldier, has submitted a deposition with the justice department alleging that he and the 20 others took part in the 1986 abduction and murder of Olalia, then leader of the leftist labour coalition, the May One Movement (KMU), as well as Olalia's driver.

"We are convinced that this case rests on strong factual and legal grounds sufficient to sustain a conviction against the accused," the lawyers said in a statement.

The new witness, a for-

mer sergeant, reportedly said he was part of the plot to kidnap and kill Olalia and that he was only coming out now because two of his compatriots had been killed and he feared the same thing might happen to him.

Among those alleged to be behind the killing are two colonels, a captain, a major, a navy lieutenant commander, 12 sergeants, two corporals and a civilian journalist close to then Defence Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile.

The soldiers are affiliated with the Reform the Armed Forces Movement (RAM), a right-wing military cabal closely affiliated with Mr. Enrile who now serves as a senator.

The RAM, along with Mr. Enrile, helped spark the popular revolt that toppled then-President Ferdinand Marcos from power in February, 1986.

However they later launched several failed coup attempts against Marcos' successor, Corason Aquino.

The government signed a peace agreement with the RAM, granting them amnesty for their coup attempts in 1995 and one of the RAM leaders, coup-plotter and former Colonel Gregorio Honasan was elected to the Philippine Senate in May, 1995.

Some of the accused, interviewed over local radio stations, dismissed the new accusation as part of previous, failed attempts to link the RAM to the killing of Olalia which came just days before a RAM-led coup try.

At the time, it was widely believed that Olalia's killing was intended to stir up unrest and prepare the ground for the coup attempt.

## 'Bogus refugees want access to Australian health service'

SYDNEY (AFP) — People from the Asia-Pacific region are seeking refugee status in Australia to gain access to surgical operations under the state-funded health service, Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock said Monday.

Visitors applying for asylum with spurious applications known as "the 30 dollar (\$20) work visa" are automatically covered by the Medicare national health service and have the right to work, he said.

Their applications sometimes take years to process and in the meantime they leave voluntarily as soon as they have had their operation.

Mr. Ruddock declined to name the nationalities taking advantage of Medicare, but said more than 11,000 applications were lodged in the 1996-97 financial year — a rise of more than 2,000 per cent since a decade earlier when the figure stood at 500.

He said anecdotal evidence showed some people were coming from neighbouring countries for the health services offered under the Medicare national health service.

"There are reports of people seeking to come here for a temporary period, putting in a claim for a protection visa in order to be able to have an operation carried out at the expense of the Australian taxpayer," he told ABC radio.

"The impression I have is that they are major operations that often require quite sophisticated equipment and involve considerable cost."

Mr. Ruddock said often the people involved withdrew their application or left Australia of their own accord once they had their operations.

A spokesman for Health Minister Michael Wooldridge was sceptical that the practice was widespread, but said the minister's office would look into what impact it may have on the health budget and discuss the issue with the Immigration Department.

"We do not have data that this is widespread but it makes sense that it is happening," the spokesman said. "If it is happening it is a matter for immigration to look at tightening up entry requirements."

## Hong Kong officials say bird flu under control

HONG KONG (AFP) — Hong Kong officials Monday claimed an initial victory in the fight against a deadly bird flu virus saying no new cases had been detected in the past two weeks after a huge chicken slaughter in the territory.

"It seems that the mass chicken cull has proved effective in controlling" the spread of the H5N1 virus, which claimed four lives, with no new cases in past two weeks, one health official said.

The two-week "safe period" was fixed by doubling the five to seven day incubation period seen in flu patients.

A Health Department spokesman said the onset date of the last case was Dec. 28, a day before the mass slaughter of some 1.5 million chickens in Hong Kong in a drastic move to halt the spread of the disease.

However, the government is still undecided on what to do with other poultry as initial tests on duck excrement, showed some also carried the H5 virus.

"We are still closely monitoring the situation," with various measures to deal with ducks including setting up a central slaugh-

terhouse, the health spokesman said.

"We have not reached decision yet whether to slaughter," all the estimated 50,000 ducks in 73 farms in the territory as a precautionary measure, he said.

Results of tests on ducks and other remaining poultry are expected in seven to 10 days time, said Acting Chief Secretary Michael Suen, who is heading the government taskforce to curb the spread of the deadly virus.

"We will make a decision when we've received the full report," he told reporters Sunday.

The virus is common to ducks and geese and is harmless to them but deadly to chickens when transmitted, a spokesman for the health department said. Of the 17 cases of H5N1 virus, previously only known to infect birds, before the Hong Kong outbreak, five remain in hospital, with three in critical condition. One other case is suspected.

The Hospital Authority, however, has warned the illness could reemerge close to the influenza season and medical staff should be on alert.

Experts are still continuing their search to isolate the source of the infection as authorities step up a clean-up of public markets.

The Hong Kong outbreak of H5N1 has fuelled fears of a possible international epidemic should clear evidence of human-to-human transmission emerge.

Experts at the U.S.-based Centres for Disease Control in Atlanta have said, however, they are increasingly confident that bird flu is not easily spread from person to person.

The government and World Health Organisation experts are studying 16 species of birds and animals including cats and dogs as part of a comprehensive study to trace the origin of the virus, a spokesman for the health department said.

Hong Kong closed poultry farms and markets last month before the mass slaughter and has banned the import of chickens from China until early next month.

The bird flu scare prompted Vietnam Saturday to ban imports of chickens from several countries including Hong Kong and China.

## 2 killed in Belgian money transport attack

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Two security guards were killed near Liege Monday when their money transport was attacked by four armed robbers disguised as policemen, judicial officials said.

The gunmen opened fire

on the occupants of the armoured transport at a motorway exit around 7:00 a.m. (0600 GMT) near Waremmme. The security men died instantly.

Posing as gendarmes, the robbers had stopped the transport using a blue

light mounted on their car.

They fled with an unknown amount of money after throwing nails on the road to hinder pursuers, leaving some 40 vehicles stranded with punctured tires.



Taleban publicly execute assassin in southern Afghanistan

KABUL (AFP) — A group of Taleban fighters publicly executed a man accused of murdering a prominent Afghan politician in southern Afghanistan on Monday.

The report said the man was executed by a firing squad in the presence of a large crowd of Taleban fighters and civilians. The man was identified as a member of the Taleban movement.

African disease kills 21 more Kenyans

Nairobi (AP) — A deadly outbreak of a disease that has killed 21 more Kenyans in the past few days, health officials said Monday.

The disease, which is a form of malaria, has been spreading rapidly in the region. Health officials are working to contain the outbreak.

World News



Julia Roberts smiles as she gives her thanks for receiving the award for Favourite Motion Picture Actress at the People's Choice Awards in Santa Monica (Reuters photo)

Oprah, Tim Allen among winners of the People's Choice Award

SANTA MONICA, California (AP) — "Jerry Maguire" was named the best movie drama and Oprah Winfrey the best female TV performer at the 24th annual People's Choice Awards ceremony.

U.S. senator to visit N. Korea, liaison office may be discussed

SEOUL (AFP) — U.S. senator Carl Levin will fly into North Korea Thursday for talks on the implementation of the 1994 nuclear agreement between Washington and Pyongyang.

Sri Lankan peninsula shuns 1st local polls in 15 years

COLOMBO (AFP) — Voters in Sri Lanka's former Tamil guerrilla heartland of Jaffna are opposing local council elections and prefer the military to run civilian affairs.

Soldiers deploy in Canada and northeast U.S. to help storm victims

MONTREAL (AFP) — Canadian army troops and U.S. National Guard soldiers were deployed Monday to help recover from a devastating ice storm that has ravaged eastern Canada and the northeastern United States for almost a week.

In Canada the military involvement is "the greatest effort in our history to lend aid in the midst of a crisis situation," Defence Secretary Art Eggleton told a press conference.

The ice storm began Jan. 5. The weight of the ice toppled trees and power lines. Eleven deaths are blamed on the storm in Canada, and at least four in the United States.

One area east of Montreal has been dubbed the "black triangle" because officials think it may be two weeks before power is restored.

state's Emergency Planning agency, hoped the state would make "major inroads in restoring power."

N. Korea thanks WFP for new food appeal

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea Monday thanked the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) for issuing a new appeal for a massive 657,000 tonnes of food aid to keep its population from starvation.

Aftershock fears plague Chinese quake survivors as aid pours in

BEIJING (AFP) — Survivors of northeastern China's killer weekend earthquake remained in a tense vigil over possible aftershocks Monday as aid donations continued to pour in.

Two days after Saturday's tremor — which killed 47 and left some 44,000 homeless in rural villages 250 kilometres northwest of here in Hebei province — officials continued to warn of follow-on quakes.

Higher than 4.5 on the Richter scale, however, more than 300 separate tremors have been recorded since Saturday's temblor, which measured 6.2, the State Seismology Bureau said.

ive Tung Chee-Hwa said Monday the government was "closely working" with the Red Cross here and in China to ascertain what kind of assistance was needed and would make "a decision very soon" on what to send.

Lady-in-waiting Sonia Gandhi keeps India guessing

NEW DELHI (AFP) — The widow of former Indian Premier Rajiv Gandhi is playing a waiting game and could yet emerge as a prime ministerial candidate after upcoming elections, analysts said Monday.

the party after years of quietly concentrating on charity work.

to power. Analysts are predicting a hung parliament.

His role in the signing of an armistice deal with Swedish firm Bofors, which allegedly involved millions of dollars of bribes, is still being investigated.

Indian lovers thrown into well by angry relatives

NEW DELHI (AFP) — An Indian man was killed and his teenage lover seriously hurt when they were thrown into a well by relatives opposed to their love affair, a newspaper said Monday.

found with multiple fractures to her arms and legs after they were thrown into a dry well in the northern state of Rajasthan Friday night, the Indian Express reported.

Kanwar's relatives after being seen together in a field.

families although they were from the same Hindu caste.



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## Plight for world

IN THE wake of the renewed wave of mass killings in Algeria, and its government's failure to put an end to them, there has been a chorus of voices calling for some sort of intervention, if not to altogether halt the massacres, to at least find out who is behind them.

One of the first international figures to sound the alarm and call for investigation is Amnesty International's Secretary General Pierre Sanet. In an article published in December Mr. Sanet, responding to mounting allegations that the Algerian authorities might be implicated in the massacres, called for an international probe into who is responsible for their perpetration.

The European Union responded earlier this month by proposing that an EU mission travel to the violence-stricken country to do just that. Algiers reacted angrily at first to the proposal, but later had to relent to pressure. The government insists that the massacres are all the work of Islamic militants who have been hating the authorities since the government annulled the results of 1992 elections whose first stage the Islamists won overwhelmingly.

Now Iran, the current president of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) has added its voice to those calling for an investigation. Mistrust between the two countries and allegations that Iran was supporting terrorism seem to be hindering the Iranian effort, however.

Whether it is the OIC, the EU or the U.N. which should get involved in tackling the situation in Algeria is not the most important question. The primary consideration is for the fratricide, which has so far claimed the lives of 80,000 people, to stop. That, we know, cannot happen just by itself. The regime in Algeria and their Islamic opponents seem nowhere near reaching a truce, much less restoring national unity and rebuilding their economically devastated country.

Less tens of thousands more Algerians, who hardly have anything to do with the conflict between the two opposing forces, lose their lives by the ugliest of methods every effort must be made to intervene now the Algerian authorities must know and acknowledge that their country's plight concerns the international community as a whole.

### ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Arab Al Yawm's Marwan Hazine expressed the view that the internationalisation of the Algerian problem would create new problems in that it would open the door for foreign nations interference in Algeria's internal affairs. There are already indications that the atrocities committed in that country are perpetrated by foreign elements which are intent on fragmenting the Algerian nation, said the writer. Foreign intervention as called for by some European countries is an invitation for the foreign powers to impose their hegemony on Algeria under the pretext of providing protection to the Algerian people according to the writer. He said there is no guarantee that such intervention would stop the blood bath or scare away the terrorist groups and there is no guarantee that the foreign powers would withdraw from Algeria later on. The writer recalled that the Western coalition against Iraq destroyed that nation's military and economic might and impoverished its people through imposing a crippling embargo on the Iraqis. He said there is no guarantee that the foreign intervention would serve as a prelude for other interventions in other Arab states internal affairs. Only the Algerian people can end the present tragedy through dialogue among the rival groups seeking to assume power in Algeria.

Tayseer Zibri, a writer for Al Ra'i daily said that there are no signs in the offing suggesting that the Netanyahu government would collapse following the departure of Foreign Minister David Levy. Netanyahu's coalition enjoys the support of at least 61 deputies in parliament out of 120 as was shown in the recent voting on the fiscal budget, noted the writer. The Israeli Labour Party itself survived for many years with such meagre majority in parliament and it is not possible at least for the foreseeable future to see the small religious parties withdrawing from the present coalition, argued the writer. He said the Arabs should stop building castles in the air and must think of other means of exercising pressure on the Israeli government. The Arabs, he added, should not wait for a gift from heaven or a miracle to change the present situation but ought rather to muster international support for their just cause and enlist the European countries assistance in putting more and more pressure on the Israeli government as long as they cannot hope for pressure to come from the U.S.

## The View from Fourth Circle

# Algeria's terrifying but unsurprising agony

By Rami G. Khouri

THE SUDDEN increase in the slaughter of Algerian villagers by the thousands over the past several weeks requires that we try to understand the causes of the madness taking place in that country with something deeper than perplexed finger pointing at Islamist rebels, free-lance thugs, and/or government agents. Some of the causes are deeper, and older, and cannot be dismissed by those who prefer to ignore the past and explain Arab violence mainly by racist and half-baked theories of religious or cultural tendencies.

We do not even know how many people have died in the last five years — estimates of the dead range from 80,000 to over 120,000. However sad, Algeria today may be the logical, violent consequence of a land and people whose modern experience has been defined by a cumulative series of severe, almost cataclysmic, political disappointments and national denials. Algeria may be an extreme microcosm of the Arab World's harsh encounter with the five primary and consecutive forces of the modern global experience: European colonialism, sudden statehood with power centrally and non-accountably held in the hands of a small elite, the use of violence on a wide scale by the state and its opponents, the failure of national sovereignty to provide the majority of its citizens with either economic security or a sense of political well-being or participation, and a last resort but unsuccessful resort to religion for elusive relief.

During over 130 years of French colonial occupation and annexation, Algerians suffered foreign domination and economic exploitation along with the added ignominy of being subjected to a mass experiment in national and social engineering — the attempted transformation of Algerians into Frenchmen and women after Algeria became an integral part of France in 1848. Algerian nationalist movements started working for liberation soon after World War I, and over one million Algerians died in the war of liberation in 1954-1962.

The promise of independence provided real benefits to the Algerian people in the 1960s, in self-respect and real economic progress. But Algeria was also a paradigm of much of the modern Arab World, with economic, political and military power almost totally held in the hands of a small group of politicians, military men, and technocrats who ran the state like a private club. The joy of liberation in 1962 was followed three years later by the bloodless coup led by Houari Boumedienne. His nationalisation of French oil and gas interests symbolised Algeria's economic self-assertion and sovereignty, but his government's autocratic ways ensured that economic

expansion would not be sustainable, and that corruption, inefficiency, waste, and favoritism would remain the order of the day.

Algeria was the pride of the Arab World in other ways — as a spokesman for the call for a New International Economic Order, a leading player in OPEC's attempt to achieve equity in North-South economic terms of reference, a mediator in hostage situations in Iran and Lebanon, and a major contributor to the quest for a meaningful Euro-Arab Dialogue.

The burdensome weight of the past proved very heavy by the late-1980s. The population of Algeria was very young — about seventy per cent under the age of thirty — and unemployment among young males reached well over fifty per cent in most cities and large towns. Economic prospects were grim: repayments on \$25 billion of foreign debt took up over 83 per cent of export earnings every year. The combination of economic stagnation, declining standards of living, and a political leadership that tolerated no dissent sparked widespread street riots and many deaths in Algerian cities in October 1988. The political leadership headed by Chadli Benjedid was forced to institute widespread constitutional reforms in February 1989, which paved the way for the establishment of the Islamic Salvation Front (better known by its French acronym, FIS).

The June 1990 local elections for 1539 municipal councils and 48 provincial assemblies — after 28 years of single party rule by the National Liberation Front (FLN in its French acronym) — ended in stunning results: the FIS was soundly rejected, winning just 28 per cent of the vote, while the FIS took an absolute majority of 54 per cent. The next elections, for the national parliament, were held in December 1991, after the state brazenly fixed the election districts to help its candidates, applied martial law, and locked up hundreds of FIS leaders. The FIS again thrashed the FLN, winning 188 of the 231 seats that were decided during the first round. The FIS needed just 28 more seats for a majority in the 430-seat parliament, which it would have won easily on the second round of voting scheduled for January 16, 1992 — but that round never took place.

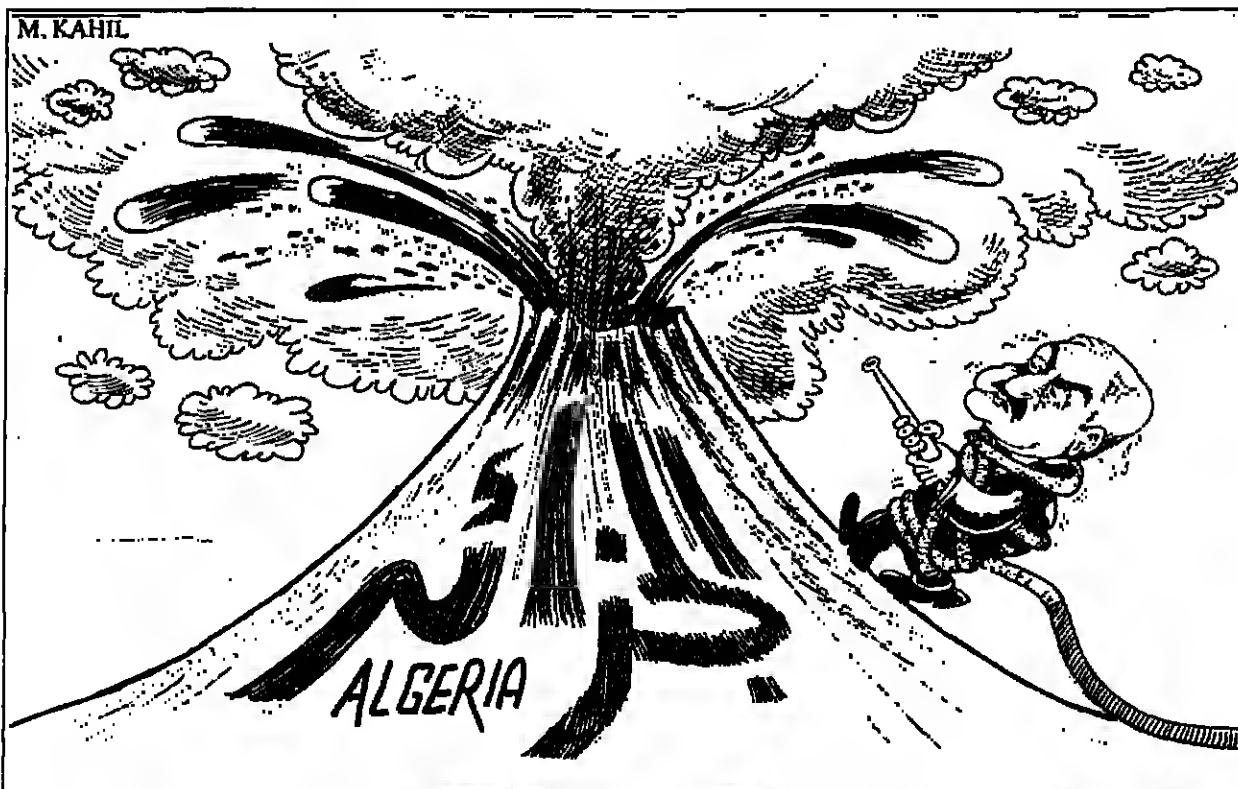
The old guard panicked, turned again to the armed forces, brought the Algerian transition to democracy to a halt, locked up over five thousand FIS activists and their key leaders, and declared another state of emergency in early 1992. A five-man higher state council was named to run the country in January 1992, but its head, Mohammad Boudiaf, was assassinated six months later.

The council was replaced by an appointed president, former defence minister Liamine Zeroual, in January 1994, and his attempts to resolve Algeria's problems through dialogue and harsh force have not worked.

The vast majority of Algerians suffer an unenviable situation that is also becoming common in some other Arab and African lands. They experienced a cruel transition from a long modern legacy of colonial rule to an often incompetent and intolerant indigenous autocracy. They now endure a terrible combination of frail economy, widespread poverty and unemployment, rising pressures on family incomes, political violence by both the state and the opposition, and a government services system that offers erratic quality care to only some of its citizens. And when, nearly in desperation, they turned to their religion — their loving God — for comfort, protection and hope, they woke up one day to find that their state had outlawed their God as a political force.

In the past century and a half, many or perhaps most Algerians have had their past taken away from them by colonial rule, their present well-being weakened by the excesses of a centralised and intolerant state, their religious and political identity curbed by the unilateral decisions of non-accountable elites, and their future hopes and expectations mongered to the madness of current violence by groups that are widely condemned, but never fully identified.

I cannot think of any other people in the world who have suffered the same consecutive series of violent struggles, heightened expectations, recurring disappointments, identity curtailments, and dashed hopes as have been experienced by the Algerian people since the early 19th century. The price of the twin and consecutive scourges of colonialism and indigenous autocracy is steep indeed, and payable in ghastly currencies that include the integrity of society, the blood of innocent civilians, and a chronic sense of despair for the future. The main problem in Algeria is not that violence against civilians occurs at its current gruesome rate, but that violence against Algerians has been continuing virtually nonstop for the past century and a half — in various forms, by various hands, for various reasons, but with a single common consequence that is the madness we witness today. Ugly and terrible, yes. Surprising or unusual, no.



## Algeria: an anatomy of a mayhem

By G.H. Jansen

NICOSIA — Any observer of the North African scene cannot but note that Algeria is "in a different universe of discourse" from both its immediate neighbours, Tunisia to the east and Morocco to the West.

All three are former French colonies. But unlike the other two, which have become normal ex-colonial states of the Third World, Algeria is drowning in a welter of blood and has become "the country of the massacres".

Why is there this startling and total difference between them?

The bloody mess in Algeria is the result of a concatenation of certain factors. Amongst these factors is the availability of individuals able, ready and willing and, perhaps even, happy to execute mass killings. Also, there is an absence of any restraining influence from a civil society. Both these factors, active and passive, are present in Algeria but, happily, absent in Tunisia and Morocco. And in Algeria alone there is an important factor from the country's colonial past contributing to the slaughter.

It is customary and all too easy and cowardly for ex-colonial countries to look back to their colonial past and then to blame the colonial power for all their post-colonial troubles. But one does have to access that ex-colonial past in Algeria. A noted French columnist and analyst wrote recently in "Le Nouvel Observateur": "Among all the Arabs who suffered humiliation under the Ottoman, British and French empires, Algerians have felt the most definitively humiliated of all."

And besides humiliating the Algerians, the French effected a transformation in the character of an entire people. The liberation struggle

against the French empire was so brutal and so prolonged and widespread that it coarsened and brutalised the Algerians. For in that battle the French made generous use of their toughest troops — the Foreign legion who had never had anything but brutal contempt for "les Arabes".

And then towards the end of the liberation war came the battle against the Organisation of the Secret Army (OAS), composed of the local "pieds noirs", the poor white settlers originally hailing from Italy, Greece, Spain and Malta who also despised and brutalised the Algerian Arabs even more than did the legionnaires. (The best known of these pieds noirs was the novelist Albert Camus who wrote several books on Algeria).

So much for the impact of the recent past. But in the present continuous tense one has to take into account the theory propounded in what is one of the most penetrating and important works that I have read. Published in 1939, on the eve of World War II, when war was in the air, this book is called "Personal Aggressiveness and War". It is by E.M. Durbin, an economist, and John Bowlby, a psychoanalyst. They pointed out that none of the impersonal "causes" of war actually explained "why" men fight. The authors identified these causes as suppressed and frustrated "personal aggressiveness", which is found — and which has to be found — in all individuals if they live in organised societies. Without being suppressed this "aggressiveness" would lead to chaos and anarchy. Suppression and frustration of individual desires are prices that the individual has to pay to lead a "civilised life". War may have political, racial or economic components but the fuel that

drives the engine of war is personal aggressiveness produced by the inevitable frustrations of societal living.

The frustrations which produced Algerian aggression were both political and economic.

Societal repressions and frustrations and anger and consequent violence became acute in Algeria because the people have never had the benefit of the safety valve of democracy. No sooner had the French left than the country fell under the strict rule and rigid control of the disciplined army-backed regime of the National Liberation Front (FLN), which had thrown out the French. The most repressive of the post-colonial regimes was the secretive and authoritarian government of General Houari Boumedienne, who was succeeded by other generals, one of whom, General Liamine Zeroual, is now president.

Democracy, however imperfect, would have curbed Algeria's violence. For, if the country had experienced a certain number of years of democratic political life, this, through a slow process of socialisation, could have produced a civil society with its complex web of checks and balances and Algeria might have developed in the same way as Tunisia and Morocco.

Political repression was accompanied by economic depression. On a visit to Algiers several years ago this correspondent descended by long flights of steps from the acropolis of Algiers to the port area, walking through tiers of lower middle class apartment buildings. On every street corner were groups of grim faced young men "propping up the walls". These were not representatives of the educated unemployed. They belonged to the barely literate, uneducated, unemployed and un-

employable. Such young men become the ready foot-soldiers of dissident movements seeking to overthrow the government and change the society.

In 1992 the dissidents, led by the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), were given the opportunity to revolt by the government when it cancelled the second stage of a parliamentary election which the Islamists were slated to win. At first the FIS declared an insurrection and fielded its militia, the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS), against the army of the state, then against leaders of the secular society like officials, academics, journalists and sportsmen.

But the war against state and society was gradually taken over by the more violent groups, led by the Armed Islamic Groups (GIA) which recruited the most frustrated and violent of the legions of the unemployed. And to make things worse when they fell under the control of disciplined absolutists, adding layer upon layer of frustration, these recruits grew capable of every sort of brutality. They became mass murderers who do not shoot their victims but slit their throats with knives or dismember them with axes. In their blind rage and frustration against government and society they probably may not even be aware that they kill old men, women and children. The horrendous massacres, like those of the past two weeks which have taken more than 1,000 lives, are cries of despair by these murderers.

If ever there has been a case of a large proportion of a population needing to be psycho-analysed, then it is these chronically and emotionally sick young men. Even if several thousand Algerians had to be treated by psychoanalysts, this would not be too high a price to pay to end the present slaughter.

## LETTERS

What a nice experience...

To the Editor:

SCHOOL LIFE sometimes seems so boring: The same professors, the same lectures, the same routine everyday, and, of course, the same inconveniences.

"Oops.. Professor X is looking at me. I hope he isn't going to ask me something. I have no idea what he is talking about. I almost missed the whole hour, where was I? I'd better smile and pretend I am following what he is saying, but what's that stuff on the blackboard? Please time, pass quickly, my friends are waiting for me..." I guess every single student in the world is familiar with these thoughts, even "big professors".

Who is the student who has never begged his watch to move faster? I am pretty sure "no one!"

I wonder how many times this happened to me, probably too often!

When I was studying in Venice, it was very funny: Spring time, the professor telling us about the Arabs in Sicily and in the "Grand Canal", the nice voice of a "gondolier" singing "O sole mio". My mind wondering and suddenly the name of a conqueror. I thought "who is this guy? I'd better catch up otherwise what will I do in the exam?" Because the worst thing is that professors, always know when you do not pay attention and I wonder how they do it, but during the exam they always remember it. "Ca' Foscari" University of Venice is where I started my studies of the Arab culture: led by the spirit of the "Arabian nights" I landed in Jordan. Here I became a student and a teacher. As a student I attended the University of Jordan — a campus with well-kept buildings and a pleasant atmosphere. As a teacher, I had the chance to work in Al al Bayt University. I was really impressed by the language centre of the newer university. Its facilities are very well-organised and more extensive than in Venice or London!

I had the pleasure of viewing the class from the teacher's perspective. Many times I saw students miles away from Italian grammar! I wonder where they were? Maybe dreaming about foreign countries as I always did! Personally I think that the experience of studying abroad is definitely a chance that every student should have. It enriches a person's life and it is a memory that will stay forever.

Emanuela Pozzan



# agony

## Women in danger from cradle to grave

### 'Details to catch the imagination and the heart'

an appointed president for the Zeruia, in January 1997, Algeria's problems there are not worked out.

By Noeleen Heyzer

NEW YORK — Violence against women is pervasive not just in war or refugee camps but on the street, in the workplace and in the home. Domestic violence not only causes physical suffering but disrupts women's lives and blocks their individual growth and participation in society.

The blow that lands on a woman's back shudders through her whole village: the reverberations go on forever. Her garden goes untended as she limps with her injuries; her children are underfed; their schooling suffers; the girls, learning fear and abasement from their mother's plight, fail to thrive or achieve.

The brutality of an unsustainable economic system drives women from their homes in search for subsistence: entire economies rely on the overseas wages of displaced women. In the wake of these courageous economic migrants lie fragmented families, disrupted and alienated adolescents and a social fabric swiftly unravelling.

Warring groups of men cross and re-cross a territory, burning houses, blowing up bridges — and targeting the women and girls of the region for particular violence and terror. The raped, torn and devastated women are the territorial marker left behind by the armed warriors. Crushed and wounded, women must struggle against heartbreaking odds to reconstruct their families, rebuild their homes, and ensure that their cultural, religious and traditional treasure stores of narrative and knowledge will not be scattered to the cold winds.

Violence against women takes many forms, but it is universal. As the U.N. Development Programme's annual Human Development Report commented: "In no society are women secure or treated as equal to men. Personal insecurity shudders them from cradle to grave... From childhood through adulthood, they are abused because of their gender."

Because violence against girls and women underlies all human societies, we are all the poorer for it: world development is impeded by exactly the measure of the harm dealt out to women; the common future of all of us shrinks to exactly the degree that women are impeded from nourishing themselves and their families.

The facts and the numbers are stunning: Roughly 60 million women who should be alive today are "missing" because of gender discrimination; in the United States, a woman is physically abused by her intimate partner every 9 seconds; every day, another 6,000 girls are genitally mutilated; in India more than 5,000 women are killed each year in the notorious "dowry murders"; in the Rwanda nightmare more than 15,000 women were raped in one year.

We are not helpless in the face of this scourge. It is a matter of changing attitudes and refusing to sustain and/or collude with a cruel construct of tolerated violence. To reject the prevailing acceptance and denial of the problem requires a willingness to confront and to expose the social function served by violence — which is to exert control over women's lives, appropriate their labour, and rob them of the stature and the dignity they are entitled to share equally with men.

In recent years, world alarm has been galvanised by mass rapes and brutalisation of women in seven different countries. Even in societies where there is no armed conflict, the continual assault on women everywhere — in their homes and in their communities — amounts to a covert guerrilla war waged against women.

At this historic moment of public awareness, following the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and the almost simultaneous exposure of the atrocities against women in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, it seems more possible than ever to mobilise effectively against systemic oppression of women. Women have an enormous stake in building societies at peace. The sharing, mutual care and cooperation that underpin happy and stable communities cannot flourish without peace, and these values must be at the centre of our development strategies.

The dismantling of power structures, in which violence is used and tolerated as a tool in the oppression and degradation of women will take energy, determination and creative strategies.

As Professor Charlotte Bunch, Director of the Centre for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University, aptly argued: "It is only when women and girls gain their place as strong and equal members of society that violence against them will be viewed as a shocking aberration, rather than as an invisible norm."

Among the most urgent strategies to empower women worldwide are: The education of girls, the implementing of progressive anti-violence laws, dissemination of information to women about their rights, fostering of women's economic autonomy, training of police and judiciary in gender equality, and political participation of women.

One heinous initiative in this enormous task is the Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women, established at UNIFEM by the General Assembly in 1996. In its first year, the Trust Fund allocated over \$1.2 million to 6 projects in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

The demand is enormous — women's groups, and increasingly, governments, are striving to liberate women and girls from the grip of fear and brutalisation. Projects supported by the Trust Fund include: Lobbying for legislative reforms, legal literacy efforts at the grassroots level, radio programmes, hotlines, litigation funds, community-based support groups, media awareness courses, advocacy in refugee camps, self-defence skill training, and education programmes for young women.

1998 is the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We must seize this commemorative year as a challenge to re-charge our spirits, to fight for change, and to reassert our deep commitment to UNIFEM's foundational belief that women's rights are human rights. We have the Beijing Platform for Action to guide us. Step by step, clause by clause, we must and we will enact these fundamental principles of human rights: they must become as real and as sustaining as food and drink to every woman on the planet — PANOS

The writer is the director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

## Domestic workers 'sold' for \$5,000

By Diego Cevallos

MEXICO CITY — Five thousand dollars is the price paid in Israel for a female Mexican domestic servant, a person to be kept in virtual slavery, much as they are back home.

Six women "sold" into domestic service in Israeli families were rescued by Mexican consular authorities after lodging complaints of mistreatment, discrimination and confinement, according to reports released recently.

The authorities are investigating various people allegedly responsible for the crime, forming part of a pattern which has been increasing over recent years.

The women who were dealt with by the authorities and repatriated to Mexico, were taken to Israel on false pretences, and it is thought many more are suffering similar treatment there.

"What is happening in Israel can also be seen in many other countries. However, the situation of domestic workers is also practically slavery in our own country," said Carmen Saavedra, coordinator of the non-governmental Colectivo Atabal.

Around two million women work as domestic employees in Mexico. The majority receive a salary lower than the minimum and have no right to social security, holi-

days, limited working hours nor maternity leave.

A high percentage of these women come from the southern states of Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca, the poorest in the country, and these workers are subject to the arbitrariness of their bosses, who decide on which rights they have and how they live.

An investigation by the Latin American and Caribbean Confederation of Domestic Workers indicated a high percentage of domestic employees in the Mexican capital also suffer from aggression at work and sexual harassment.

In Mexico, a female servant living outside the house she works in will be paid between \$6 and \$14.5 per day, while those living and working in the same place earn around \$120 a month.

"We have been fighting for years for the living conditions of female domestic servants to be improved, but they are still the ugly duckling of Mexican society and we have received no reply," said Eva Soto, representative of the National Organisation of Non-Salaried Domestic and Related Workers.

Based on studies in the field, the Colectivo Atabal said 75 per cent of female domestic workers in the capital come from rural areas, 27 per cent are aged 40 or over, 50 per cent are single, 68 per cent have barely finished primary school and 4.3 per cent are illiterate.

"The female domestic workers are at the back of the bus. There are few people and organisations concerned about their situation and we demand changes in the law," said Saavedra.

Hundreds of domestic workers meet up on Sundays in parks and certain public transport stations in the capital to get to know each other, discuss their problems and perhaps get themselves a partner.

It is here that the traffickers approach the youngest workers and suggest they travel to Israel and other countries to work in supposedly favourable conditions.

The authorities do not know for certain how many Mexican women have been taken to other countries in this manner. At present they are hot on the trail of several networks dedicated to the "sale" of female domestic workers.

"The issue is not well dealt with, but we are doing everything possible to bring it before the government, the judges and deputies, for we cannot allow employment smuggling so much of slavery to continue to exist on the threshold of the 21st century," said Saavedra — IPS.

## 103 dead, 70 wounded in latest Algerian massacre — official

(Continued from page 1)

assailants butchering victims as they tried to flee.

At the Mustapha Hospital, a 12-year-old boy, Hamid, was suffering from a gunshot in the heel of his foot.

His face was also bloated, as he told AFP that he was at a video store watching a film Sunday evening with other residents after the sundown break in Ramadan fasting when "men stormed in and began shooting after throwing a bomb."

The assailants then attacked another store, the boy added.

Several newspapers said at least 54 people were killed at the weekend in a series of other ambush attacks.

Al Watan said 11 people had their throats slit Saturday in the region of Bouira, 100 kilometres southeast of Algiers, ahead of a visit there by Interior Minister Mustafa Benmansour. The minister attended the funeral of the victims on Sunday after reviewing the security forces in the region.

The latest massacres are part of an upsurge in atrocities that the military-backed extremists who have been at war with the authorities since the cancellation in January 1992 of elections that the Islamic Salvation Front was poised to win.

The administration of President Lamine Zeroual agreed last week under intense international pressure over the killings to a visit by a troika of European Union delegates from Austria, Britain and Luxembourg.

But the government harried the mission from conducting any inquiry into the massacres, which it insists are an internal matter.

The planned visit represents the first initiative by the EU to get involved in the six-year-old conflict in the north African state, which has claimed an estimated 80,000 lives.

## King, Vedrine review recent Mideast peace developments

(Continued from page 1)

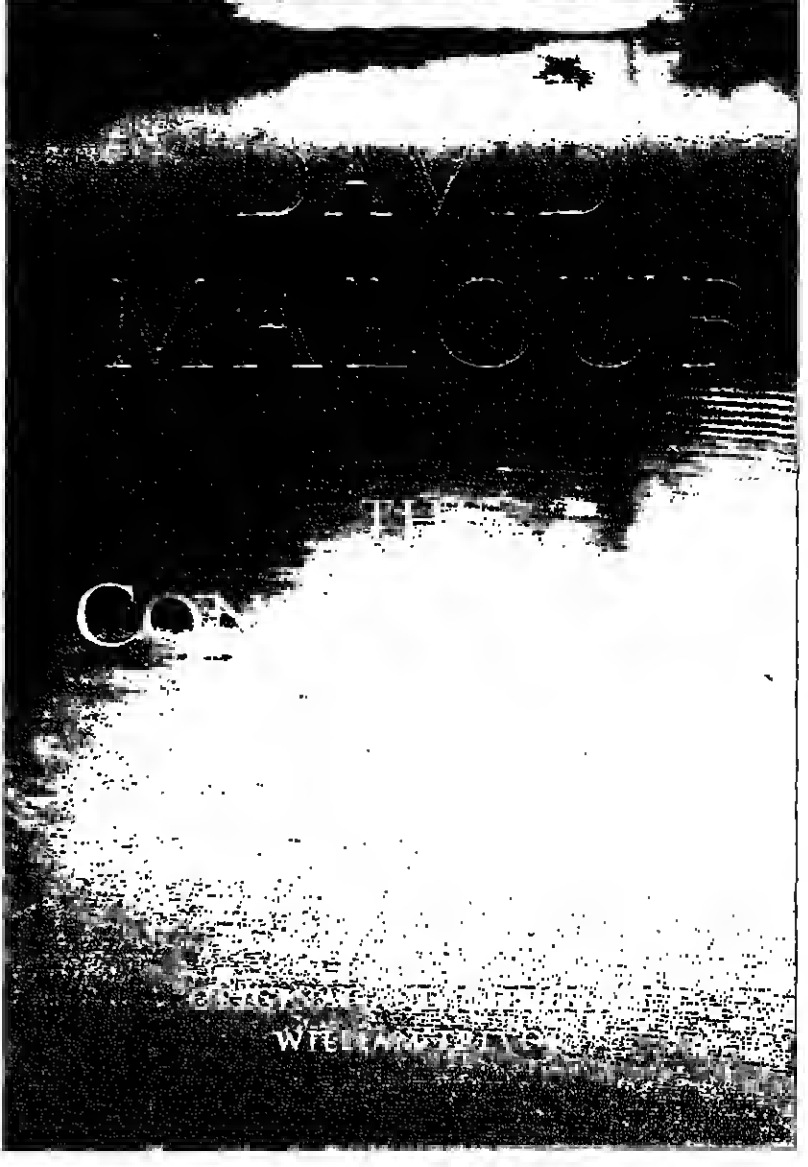
Dr. Tarawneh said that Amman supports Iraq's quest to safeguard its national sovereignty adding that the Kingdom believes that the only way to speed up the lifting of the sanctions was Iraq's "full compliance" with UNSCOM.

The Jordanian minister said that the Kingdom hopes for "a quick end to the embargo against the Iraqi people."

Mr. Vedrine, who visited Israel and the Palestinian self-rule areas in December, said that his country was ready to help in any effort that would end the bloodshed in Algeria.

The minister stressed that any French effort in this regard will only be upon a request and approval from the Algerian government, themselves, in a way that reinforces his reputation as one of Australia's finest novelists.

Sally Bland



the native Aboriginal population of Australia. In *Conversations at Curlew Creek*, he has delved into the inequalities separating the settlers











# Broncos, Packers in Super Bowl

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — No team ever has lost five Super Bowls. The Denver Broncos will have to snap the NFC's 13-year winning streak and beat the defending champion Green Bay Packers to avoid becoming the first.

The Broncos beat the Pittsburgh Steelers 24-21 Sunday and will bring their "revenge tour" to San Diego on Jan. 25 as the fifth wild-card team to get to the Super Bowl. Only one, the 1980 Oakland Raiders, won the big game.

The Raiders also were the last AFC team to win the League Championship, in 1983.

"We will represent the AFC well," said Pat Bowlen, owner of the Broncos, one of three franchises with an 0-4 Super Bowl record. "I think the AFC is going to the Super Bowl and will win it."

To do so, Denver (15-4) must deal with a Green Bay defense that has become dominant recently, particularly in the 23-10 NFC championship win Sunday at San Francisco. The Packers are a 13 1/2-point favorite.

The Packers (15-3) have allowed 61 points in their last six meaningful games — their season-ending 31-21 victory over Buffalo had no bearing on the standings. Just 17 of those points came in the playoffs, and one was on Chuck Levy's Kickoff return with the game decided Sunday.

"Our style is aggressive," said Packers safety Eugene Robinson, whose first-half interception was a key element in the victory at rainy San Francisco. "We're really intense."

Both coaches, Green Bay's Mike Holmgren and Denver's Mike Shanahan, served as assistant coaches on winning Super Bowl teams with the 49ers. Holmgren, of course, won it as a head coach last year.

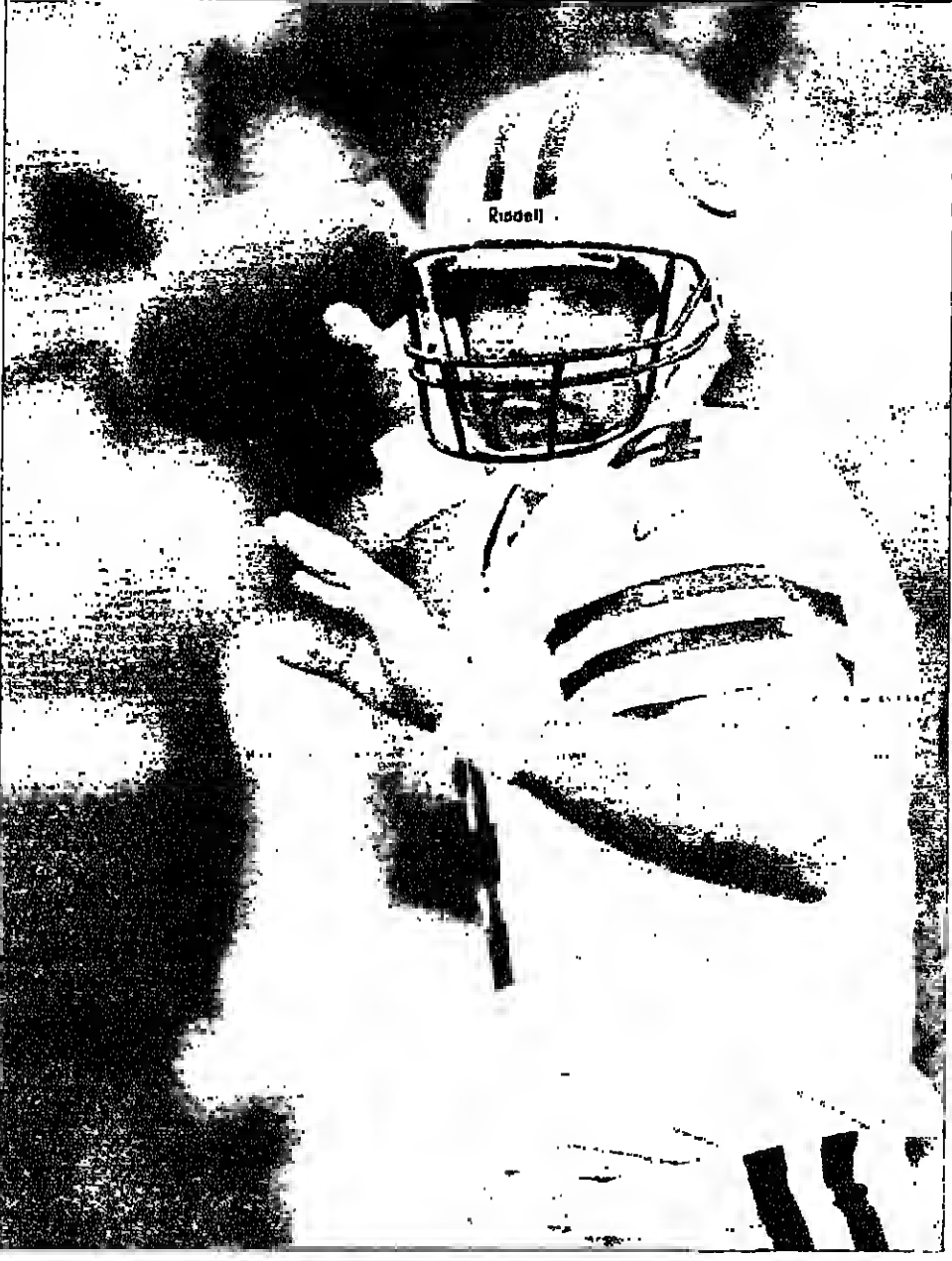
"It's wonderful," Holmgren said of the return to the Super Bowl. "It's extra special here today."

The teams had four common opponents: Carolina, New England, Buffalo and St. Louis. Both swept them all.

Both were road winners in the conference title games, only the third time that's happened in



Denver Broncos' running back Terrell Davis (R) runs past Pittsburgh Steelers' defensive back Chad Scott as Davis picks up 19 yards and the first down during Denver's final drive to run out the clock in the AFC Championship game at Three Rivers Stadium in Pittsburgh. The Broncos won the game 24-21 to advance to Super Bowl XXXII in San Diego on January 25 (Reuters photo).



Green Bay Packers' quarterback Brett Favre drops back for a pass during the NFC Championship game against the San Francisco 49ers in San Francisco's 3Com Park. The Packers are the defending Super Bowl Champions (Reuters photo).

## GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF  
& TANNIA HIRSH

### THE TELL-TALE SPOT

Neither vulnerable. South deals.

**NORTH**  
♠ Q 7 6  
♥ K 8 3  
♦ J 6 2  
♣ A J 7 4

**EAST**  
♠ K 10 8  
♥ Q J 8 5  
♦ K Q 5  
♣ 10 6 3

**SOUTH**  
♠ A J 3  
♥ A 2  
♦ A 9 8 4 3  
♣ K Q 6

The bidding: SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST

1NT Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Four of ♣

Pay careful attention to the fall of the cards. The spotcard an opponent plays can paint a pretty picture.

North-South were playing a forcing club system, so South's opening bid showed a balanced hand of 14-16 points. North's raise to game was automatic.

West led a low heart, and declarer was not impressed with the con-

tract. With only seven fast winners two tricks had to be developed quickly — if declarer gave up the lead twice, the defenders would score at least two heart tricks, two spades and a diamond. That meant the diamond suit had to be manipulated for the loss of only one trick in the suit. A maneuver known as the intra-finesse was one way to accomplish the task.

Declarer won the first heart trick in hand and immediately led the nine of diamonds. When West followed with the seven, declarer played low from the table and was delighted to see East win with the king. Six came a heart, and declarer's second stopper in the suit was eliminated.

Everything now hinged on the diamond distribution. If West had started with a doubleton 10 7, correct was to lead the jack, picking up East's queen while pinning West's ten — the intra-finesse. The alternative was to play East for a doubleton K Q.

If West had started with 10 7 3 of diamonds, the defender might have followed with the three. So, backing this analysis, declarer led the jack of diamonds from dummy, smothering the ten and an overtrick rolled in!

the Super Bowl era, each had runners gain more than 100 yards against their opponents for the first time: Dorsey Levens rushed for 114 and Terrell Davis had 139.

In taking the hard way to San Diego, the Broncos avenged some of their most painful recent defeats.

They beat Jacksonville, which upset them in Denver last season when the Broncos had the home-field advantage for the AFC playoffs. This time, the Jaguars were blown out at mile high stadium.

Denver went to arch-rival Kansas City last week and knocked off the highest seed in the conference. The Chiefs' last-second home victory over Denver in game 11 propelled them to the AFC west crown.

And, finally, the win against the Steelers, who helped Denver's slide to a wild-card berth with a

35-24 decision in game 14.

"We met some great ball clubs in this tournament and stuck together to win and no doubt we deserved them," Neil Smith said. "We wanted to give No. 7 (quarterback John Elway) another chance at this, with him at the helm I know we are in good hands."

But so are the Packers, whose defense has hit its stride to match the balanced offense led by three-time most valuable player Brett Favre and Levens.

Green Bay is 3-0 in the Super Bowl, having won the first two before a 29-year interval. Elway would like to get to know the feeling the Packers have experienced at the end of each of those victories.

"I'm not happy just getting back there," Elway said. "I want to win it. I've been there before."

## New Australian tennis sensation takes on Sydney

SYDNEY (AFP) — The Australian teenager who humbled his hero Andre Agassi on the way to an historic ATP tournament victory descended on the Sydney International Monday in a flurry of autographs and interviews.

Sixteen-year-old Lleyton Hewitt, the lowest-ranked and second-youngest player to win an ATP final, announced he was giving up school and turning professional after his stunning performance.

"When you have the opportunity to give tennis a chance, you've got to take it as soon as possible and not let it slip," said Hewitt, who will lift his ranking from 550 to about 200.

On Sunday he came from behind to beat compatriot Jason Stoltenberg 3-6 6-3 7-6 (7-4) and snare the Australian men's Hardcourt title here in only his second ATP tour event, which he squeezed into as a wildcard entry.

There are big hopes for the youngster who has been given front-page treatment and is already being compared with Aussie stars Pat Cash and Pat Rafter.

Hewitt faced the international media Monday after a hectic schedule of television appearances, radio interviews and requests for autographs — he confessed he only recently stopped collecting them himself.

Australia's newest tennis sensation admitted, he was, enjoying the attention — five-star hotels, being addressed as "Sir" and rubbing shoulders with his heroes in the locker room. But he remained modest as his win began to sink in. "I'm a lot younger than anyone else so I try not to get in their way around the place," he said.

"Sure I've had five good wins but there's a long way to go I think. As long as my game keeps improving and I start getting a bit stronger and bigger, then hopefully I can go onto bigger and better things."

The youngest player to win an ATP tour event since current world number three Michael Chang, Hewitt was also the youngest ever qualifier at the Australian Open last year.

The self-described aggressive baseline player was cautiously hopeful about his prospects at the Sydney International and the Open in two more wildcard entries.

"Hopefully I can win a round. Five sets is going to be a new experience as well," he said.

Hewitt will meet world number four Jonas Bjorkman in a first round meeting here Tuesday.

World number seven and last year's runner-up Carlos Moya was the first big casualty at the Sydney tournament Monday, going down to Sweden's Thomas Enqvist 6-7 6-4 6-4 in the first round.

It was a disappointing start to the year for the Spaniard who shone here last year, reaching the finals where he missed out to Britain's Tim Henman and then going on the Australian Open finals.

## Knicks beat Sonics

NEW YORK (AP) — The Seattle SuperSonics had a pair of eight-game winning streaks halted Sunday night, losing 92-91 to the New York Knicks when Dale Ellis missed a short jumper at the buzzer.

The Sonics, who had won eight straight overall and eight in a row on the road, had two chances to win it in the final seconds.

Gary Payton — who had struggled all night — missed a runner in the lane with four seconds left. The ball went out of bounds off New York, giving Seattle one last chance, but Ellis was unable to connect on a corner jumper from about 10 feet away.

It was the first road loss for the Sonics since Dec. 7 and their first loss of any kind since Dec. 23.

Larry Johnson scored 20 points for New York, while Detlef Schrempf led Seattle with 23 points and 13 rebounds.

• **Atlanta Hawks 107, Washington Wizards 102:** At Washington, Christian Laettner scored 23 points and Steve Smith scored four of his 22 points in overtime as the Atlanta Hawks beat the Washington Wizards for the second time in three days.

The Hawks won their third in a row after a seven-game losing streak. They also beat Washington 82-77 Friday in Atlanta.

• **Detroit Pistons 113, Los Angeles Clippers 85:** In the Detroit suburb of Auburn Hills, Grant Hill scored 33 points as the Detroit Pistons routed the Los Angeles Clippers.

Hill, who set a career high with 15 field goals, also had 10 rebounds and six assists. Jerry Stackhouse added 20 points for Detroit, and Malik Sealy had 17.

Brent Barry led the Clippers with 17.

• **Miami Heat 96, Vancouver Grizzlies 90:** At Vancouver, British Columbia, Alonzo Mourning had 17 points, 15 rebounds and seven blocks as Miami handed Vancouver its 10th straight loss.

Tim Hardaway had 20 points and nine assists for the Heat, who won their third in a row. Voshon Lenard added 16 points for Miami.

• **Charlotte Hornets 98, Los Angeles Lakers 93:** In the Los Angeles suburb of Inglewood, David Wesley scored 23 points, and Anthony Mason had seven of his 22 in the fourth quarter as the Charlotte Hornets beat the Los Angeles Lakers.

After rebounding teammate Vlade Divac's missed shot, Mason was fouled and made two free throws with 19.3 seconds remaining to give the Hornets a 94-90 lead.

Shaquille O'Neal led the Lakers with 32 points and 13 rebounds.

## SCOREBOARD

NBA			
Atlanta	107	Washington	102 (OT)
Detroit	113	LA Clippers	85
New York	92	Seattle	91
Miami	96	Vancouver	90
Charlotte	98	LA Lakers	93

### Sydney International tennis tournament

Anna Kournikova (RUS) bt Yayuk Basuki (INA)	6-4 3-0 retired
Natasha Zvereva (BLR) bt Rachel McQuillan (AUS)	6-2 7-5
Conchita Martinez (SPA x6) bt Gala Leon Garcia (SPA)	6-2 6-3
Sandrine Testud (FRA x7) Kerry-Anne Guse (AUS)	6-1 6-2
Francisco Clavet (SPA) bt Thomas Johansson (SWE)	6-3 7-5
Chanda Rubin (USA) bt Anke Huber (GER x8)	6-2 6-3
Thomas Enqvist (SWE) bt Carlos Moya (SPA x3)	6-7 (6-8) 6-4 6-4
Sargis Sargsian (ARM) bt Scott Draper (AUS)	7-6 (8-6) 3-6 6-1
Hendrik Dreckman (GER) bt Alex Corretja (SPA x5)	6-2 6-4

### French First Division

Paris St. Germain	2	Strasbourg	1
Nantes	1	Lens	0

### Italian Serie A

Bari	0	Atalanta	0
Brescia	1	Florentina	3
Empoli	0	Bologna	0
Juventus	2	Vicenza	0
Lazio	4	Lecce	0
AC Milan	0	AS Roma	0
Piacenza	0	Inter Milan	1
Sampdoria	5	Parma	2
Udinese	1	Napoli	1

### NFL Conference finals

Broncos	24	Steelers	21
Packers	23	49ers	10

### English Premiership

Derby	3	Blackburn	1
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### Spanish First Division

Real Sociedad	2	Barcelona	2
Merida	2	Oviedo	1
Zaragoza	1	Celta Vigo	0
Espanyol	0	Athletic Bilbao	1
Salamanca	0	R.g Santander	0
Deportivo La Coruna	1	Tenerife	0
Sporting Gijon	0	Compostela	2
Betis vs. Valladolid	postponed		

## Korda wins Qatar Open

DOHA (AFP) — Third seed Petr Korda of the Czech Republic won the \$1 million Qatar Open final here on Sunday, comprehensively beating eighth-seeded Frenchman Fabrice Santoro 6-0, 6-3.

Korda tore through the encounter in just 59 minutes to lift the title for the second time having beaten Morocco's Younes El Aynaoui in the 1996 final.

He pocketed \$137,000 for his latest win.

Santoro was clearly feeling the effect of playing three matches the previous day. He beat top-seeded Briton Greg Rusedski and another big server in Croatian Goran Ivanisevic in the quarters and semis before playing a doubles match on top.

A misplaced line call midway through the opening set was enough to end Santoro's resistance and Korda barely had to break sweat to complete the win. "I was just a spectator," Santoro told reporters afterwards.

"It was my easiest match in ages," said Korda, though he admitted his rival was "very tired."

## 'Sugar Ray Leonard's career could be over'

SYDNEY (AFP) — Boxing legend Sugar Ray Leonard Monday pulled out of a scheduled bout here, giving no reason and possibly signalling the end of his career, his American promoter Mike Aciri said.

Leonard, 41, the first man to win a world title in five divisions, was to fight fellow American and world No. 3 ranked World Boxing Association junior middleweight contender Tony Meneff on February 15.

"Leonard gave no reason as to why he wouldn't come to Australia," Australian promoter Bill Morley said.

Leonard's long-time trainer Janks Norton stormed out of their Los Angeles hotel on hearing the news, Morley said. "He was in full training and had agreed terms. All the conditions were fine, the only thing he didn't do was sign a contract."

Morley said Aciri suggested to him his fighter's decision had cast doubt on his comeback and effectively ended his career.

"I don't know what's wrong with him. He'd agreed to the fight, the money was right. Everything was OK with our deal," Aciri said.

"Then 24 hours before he was scheduled for a satellite television press conference in Los Angeles he just turns around and says he's not fighting."

Leonard, who won world titles at welterweight, junior middleweight, middleweight, super middleweight and light heavyweight returned to the ring last March after a six-year lay-off.

He suffered the first inside the distance loss of his illustrious career when he was stopped in the fifth round by Hector Camacho.

TODAY AT	<b>PHILADELPHIA "1"</b> George Clooney & Nicole Kidman ... in <b>THE PEACEMAKER</b> Shows: 12:15, 2:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	<b>PHILADELPHIA "2"</b> Winona Rider & Anne Bancroft ... in <b>AMERICAN QUILT</b> Shows: 12:15, 2:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	<b>PLAZA</b> SCREAM Shows: 12:00, 6:30 AL MASEER (Arabic) Nour Al Sharif Shows: 8:30, 10:45 HERCULES Shows: 2:00 p.m.	<b>CONCORD</b> CONCORD "1" CONSPIRACY THEORY Shows: 12:00, 2:00, 6:00, 8:30, 10:45 MURDER 1600 Shows: 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD "2" MR. BEAN Shows: 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	<b>GALLERIA 2</b> ABDOUN Demi Moore ... in <b>THE JUROR</b> Shows: 8:30, 10:30 GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE Shows: 2:00, 6:30	<b>GALLERIA 1</b> ABDOUN Jim Carie... in <b>THE CABLE GUY</b> Shows: 2:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	<b>Hisham Yanes Theatre</b> TEL: 625155 NOW ON DAILY <b>THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE</b> Starring Hisham Yanes and Amal Dabbas For reservations call: 640155, 625155
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**NO SCHOOL — LOTS OF FUN:** Children slide down a hill covered with snow in western Amman, Monday, using makeshift sleds such as food serving trays and plastic bags. The first snowstorm of the winter has paralysed activity in Amman, blocked all roads to the capital and has affected air traffic in both of Amman's airports. Schools, universities and colleges all across the Kingdom closed for the day. 264 weather related accidents were reported (Photo by Yousef 'Allan')



**PALESTINIAN SNOWMAN:** Youths tie a traditional headdress to the snowman they had erected in front of the Dome of the Rock Mosque in Jerusalem's Old City Monday. More than 50 cm of snow fell overnight in the Jerusalem area and a rare holiday mood prevailed throughout the city (AP photo)



**ENJOYING THE GOOD WEATHER IN LEBANON:** A man wearing only shorts and running shoes, his bare chest covered with a tattoo, braves a snowstorm in the Bhamdoun town Monday. Lebanese mountains were covered with snow at altitudes higher than 200 metres (AP photo)



**'Playboy' leads sex revolution tour of Washington**

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Tourists who come here to visit the White House, the Lincoln Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery may now view some of the sites of the so-called sexual revolution as well. A new guided bus tour organised by Playboy magazine examines the history of U.S. laws concerning freedom of expression during the 20th century, with a focus on moral repression and sex scandals in politics. "The major battles in the sexual revolution were fought in Washington," said James Petersen, who has just published a series of 10 articles on the history of the U.S. sexual revolution.

**Dinosaur bones to take ride on space shuttle**

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Dinosaur bones will be taking a ride on the space shuttle. Retired astronaut Jay Apt, now director of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History, offered a 214-million-year-old coelophysis skull to NASA for the upcoming mission of the space shuttle Atlantis, which lifts off Jan. 22. "This remarkable opportunity to marry the earth's history with humankind's future is what the museum of natural history is all about," Apt said.

**Chinese city puts Mao's poetry on display — in neon**

BEIJING (AFP) — South China's Changsha city has dedicated a square to the poetry of Mao Zedong, surrounding it with signs displaying more than 50 of the communist leader's poems in neon. "The poems are popular with local people, who visit the square to have a look and even copy down the poems," the Xinhua news agency said. Set up to mark the 104th anniversary of Mao's birth, the square is located adjacent to Number 1 Teacher's School of Hunan, where the "great helmsman" studied in his youth. Entrepreneurs in his birthplace, nearby Shaoshan village, have abandoned Mao's ideology to profit from a brisk flow of tourists.

**Thailand firemen respond to elephant emergency**

BANGKOK (AFP) — Firemen rushed to the rescue of a 96-year-old elephant which had fallen into a ditch in Bangkok as locals tried to drag the animal free with chains, reports said Monday. The ageing pachyderm was feeding in a vacant lot under the supervision of its mahout, Boonmee Sukris, when it fell into the muddy hole. Fire crews rushed to the scene with cranes but could not free the elephant. Local residents then tried to drag it out of the ditch with chains and fire hoses, but to no avail. The elephant was eventually freed with the help of an excavation truck, but not until concerned onlookers raised the \$55 fee demanded by the driver.

**Leeson movie set for shoot in Singapore**

SINGAPORE (AFP) — Popular British actor Ewan McGregor will take centre stage in a movie on the rise and fall of rogue trader Nick Leeson, whose soiled deals caused the collapse of Britain's Barings Bank. McGregor, who received critical praise for his performance as a drug addict in the movie, "Trainspotting," will be in Singapore this weekend to shoot "Rogue Trader" in which he plays Leeson. The movie also stars model Anna Friel as Leeson's wife Lisa who reportedly wanted to divorce her husband after reading about his exploits with other women in his book.

## 30 centimetres of snow cover Amman, 2 metres in the south

AMMAN (J.T.) — The snowstorms which hit most regions of Jordan Sunday tapered off Monday afternoon, but the Department of Meteorology forecast more rain showers and warned of frost formation on Tuesday and Wednesday.

A MET spokesperson told the Jordan Times Monday that the weather is expected to be cloudy with occasional rainfall and temperatures dropping to below zero degrees Celsius at night and rising to a maximum of six degrees during the day.

On Wednesday, it is expected to remain cold with a little chance for showers with temperatures rising to a maximum of 10 during the day and dropping to zero at night.

According to the spokesperson, the snowstorms dumped about 30 centimetres of snow on Amman between Sunday and Monday morning while as much as two metres of snow blanketed the southern regions of the Kingdom.

The Civil Defence Department (CDD) said that dozens of people were stranded on highways including the Queen Alia International Airport Highway while fog covered the road and hilly regions of the capital.

A CDD spokesperson said that civil defence men dealt with 264 accidents as well as some calling for first aid and rescue operations in aid of sick people, pregnant women or cit-

izens with heart conditions who needed transportation to hospitals.

The CDD also dealt with scores of car accidents on the slippery roads adding that CDD rescued a number of people who were besieged by snow in their cars and homes. Meanwhile, a police spokesman was quoted as saying that at least 50 road accidents were reported but that there were no deaths or serious injuries.

Civil Aviation Authority officials reported that some flights were unable to land in Amman and were diverted to the southern Red Sea resort of Aqaba. But a Royal Jordanian (RJ) official told the Jordan Times

that the Queen Alia Airport was not closed and most of the flights took off on schedule but noted that there were some delays due to passengers facing difficulties in reaching the airport.

He said that the majority of passengers gathered at RJ offices located at the Seventh Circle and were transported to the airport by RJ buses.

The CDD had reported earlier that roads in different regions including the Amman governorate were either completely or partially blocked by snow but work was underway to open them.

The snow prompted Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Sa'ad Hayel Sour

to postpone House sessions for Tuesday. He said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency that Parliament will convene on Wednesday to pursue debate on the draft 1998 fiscal budget.

The snowstorms also forced schools, universities and community colleges to close Monday.

Most government departments opened but only few employees were able to make it to their places of work and the U.N. offices reported similar employee turnout.

Free for the day, children played in the snow, skated on icy roads and pavements and threw snowballs from rooftops at pedestrians.

The Department of Meteorology reported on the cumulative amounts of rainwater which fell in the different regions so far during the current winter season. It said that the highest amounts of rain, 362.9 millimetres, fell in the Ajloun region in northern Jordan, accounting for 66 per cent of the total annual average amounts of rain that normally fall in that region.

The blizzard on Sunday and Monday was also reported to have swept across much of the Middle East stranding motorists, cutting power lines and bringing life to a standstill in some countries.

In Lebanon one woman was killed late Sunday when the car

in which she was riding slid off a mountain road and fell into a ravine. Her husband and sister were hospitalised with injuries, according to local police.

In Iran, civil defence workers rescued 150 passengers stranded in buses, trucks and cars near the city of Marivan close to the Iraqi border.

The Iranian news agency said 50 centimetres of snow had fallen in the Ilam province and that some 100 centimetres of snow were reported in nearby mountains.

Snow covered Syria leaving many families without heat in sub zero weather conditions and most schools and government offices were ordered closed.

## Iranian president praises West, says Iran needs more freedom

NEW YORK (AP) — In his latest gesture toward the West, Iranian President Mohammad Khatami said that developing countries must understand Western civilisation in order to succeed.

In an essay written for Time magazine, President Khatami criticises Muslims for failing to understand the West and concedes that Iranian society must be freer.

Excerpts of the essay appear in the Jan. 19 edition of the U.S. magazine.

"We can say with great assurance that a society intend-

ing to reach development cannot succeed without understanding Western civilisation and the spirit of Western civilisation," Mr. Khatami writes. "Many Islamic societies, such as ours, are still regrettably deprived of such knowledge."

"Our encounter with the West is mostly on the surface; that is we have approached the West either with fascination or abhorrence."

Since taking office in August, President Khatami has taken several steps toward repairing ties with the U.S. In a rare televised interview last

week, Mr. Khatami said he considered the United States a great nation and called for increased cultural exchanges as a step toward improving ties. His comments have been criticised by hard-liners who oppose reconciliation with the U.S.

In the Time essay, President Khatami said the 1979 Islamic revolution was modern Iran's only real opportunity to enjoy freedom. But because of "alien plots," the revolutionary government had to impose strict measures to prevent chaos.

"Some blamed freedom itself for the cause of the instability and even used religion as a mask to justify their shortsightedness," he writes. "Autocracy has become our second nature. We Iranians are all dictators, in a sense."

President Khatami says Iran must strive for freedom or face the risk of more violence.

"We must endeavour to create a desirable milieu in which people can more easily tolerate one another and come up with an agreed definition of freedom and, accordingly, streamline the society," he writes.

## U.S. decides to review tough visa restrictions on Iranians

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States will review its current tough visa restrictions on Iranians as one means of encouraging rapprochement with the Tehran government, U.S. National Security Adviser Sandy Berger said Sunday.

At the same time, Mr. Berger said statements of goodwill toward Americans made by Iran's new, relatively moderate, president have yet to translate into real changes in the country's policies, Mr. Berger said on CNN.

Serious impediments remain to relations, he said, including Iran's support for terrorism, violent opposition to the Middle East peace process, development of weapons of mass destruction.

Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, in an interview with CNN last week, set a new tone in Iran's stance toward the U.S. by praising Americans and condemning all kinds of terrorism against innocent people.

The Clinton administration quickly responded by calling for a direct dialogue between the two governments, an idea still opposed by many Iranian hard-liners.

In addition to official dialogue, Mr. Berger said, the State Department is reviewing "the question of whether or not a greater exchange of private sector people would be useful. That is something we will look at, yes." The U.S. has no official relations with Iran and normally does not grant visas for cultural, political or business exchanges.

Mr. Berger commented that as President Khatami and his allies replace the hard-line leaders who have controlled Iran "there is obviously a contested vision of the future of Iran."

He said that since President Khatami assumed power last August, "there has been more change. I think, in Iran's internal behaviour, degree of tolerance internally," than in its external policies.

## Turkish court freezes funds designated for Islamic party

ANKARA (AP) — Turkey's constitutional court on Monday froze \$6 million of government funds designated for an Islamist party on trial for "anti-secularism."

The unanimous ruling came only two hours after the chief prosecutor requested the freeze, accusing the Welfare Party of planning to ignore its legal obligation to return the funds to the treasury while the constitutional court considers shutting the party down.

Each political party gets annual state subsidies determined by the votes they get in most recent elections.

The Welfare Party, the top vote-getter in 1995 parliamentary elections, is eligible for the largest share in 1998 — 1,236 trillion Turkish liras, about \$6 million.

"We have received credible intelligence that Welfare is making plans to avoid returning the money to the treasury in case of closure," prosecutor Vural Savas, told reporters.

The assets and cash reserves of any political party ordered closed by the constitutional

court are confiscated by the state. Mr. Savas asked the court, which resumed its deliberations Monday, to order Welfare's funds withheld until it reaches its decision, expected within weeks.

The court was expected to debate a new brief submitted by party officials Friday, arguing that the current pro-secular government shares some of Welfare's allegedly pro-Islamist practices. Mr. Savas' indictment cites as evidence of anti-secular activity the adjustment of working hours to fasting times during the Holy Month of Ramadan during Welfare's term in office last year.

Welfare says several current government agencies have also recently changed working hours during Ramadan.

Turkey's military, which sees itself as the guardian of the country's secular traditions, pressured Welfare out of power last June. Welfare gained 21 per cent of the votes in the 1995 elections and currently holds 150 of the 550 seats in parliament.

## Syria jails mole of Mossad manipulator — report

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Syrian authorities have arrested the contact man for a former Israeli spy who is on trial for allegedly falsifying his reports about Syrian intentions, the Haaretz newspaper reported Monday.

Yehuda Gil, 63, the former agent of the Mossad foreign intelligence service, has been charged with espionage for allegedly fabricating or distorting information purportedly received over a 21-year period from his Syrian contact.

Haaretz, citing "foreign sources quoting Syrian officials," said that following the revelation last month of Gil's detention, Syrian authorities carried out sweeping arrests, including Gil's agent.

Haaretz described the

Syrian source as "close to the government."

Earlier Israeli press reports said he was a senior military official who believed Gil was a Canadian businessman with financial interests in the region.

Gil claimed to have met regularly with his source in Europe, although Mossad officials now say that for at least several years the agent invented the encounters and made up reports to his superiors.

On two occasions, in 1980 and 1996, Gil allegedly heightened tensions between Israel and Syria by feeding his superiors false information that Damascus was planning an attack to recover the Golan Heights, which Israel occupied in 1967.

Gil, whose trial opened

behind closed doors last week in Tel Aviv, has pleaded not guilty to charges of espionage and fraud. He faces up to 15 years in prison.

Tens of thousands of dollars given to Gil for his Syrian contact over the years were found in the home of the ex-Mossad agent, who was connected to far-right circles in Israel.

Israeli courts last month lifted a ban on publication of Gil's photo after a picture of the agent was published in the international magazine Newsweek.

Mossad officials had opposed lifting the ban, fearing that publication of Gil's picture would endanger Arabs who had been seen with their agent over the past decades.

## French writer on Holocaust charges gets Arab support

DUBAI (AFP) — French writer Roger Garaudy, who is on trial in Paris for denying the existence of Nazi gas chambers, has received hundreds of messages of support, a newspaper in the United Arab Emirates said Monday.

The report came a day after the daily Al Khaleej launched a campaign of solidarity with the 84-year-old former communist who converted to Islam.

The anti-Zionist writer has received "hundreds of messages of support by fax and on the Internet," said

Al Khaleej. "The campaign is a big success and we have also received a large number of financial contributions."

It published a letter of thanks from the writer, who warned that "Zionism, with its aggressive, colonialist policies and claims to eternal domination of Jerusalem, could detonate a new world war."

The philosopher went on trial last Thursday accused of questioning crimes against humanity. The charges stem from a book he wrote in 1996 — "Les mythes fondateurs de la politique

Israélienne" (Founding Myths of Israeli Politics) — denying the existence of Nazi gas chambers for the extermination of the Jews.

Such remarks are illegal under a French law against neo-Nazi activities. Garaudy said the extermination of six million Jews during World War II by the Nazis was a "myth" used to justify "everything Israel has demanded and obtained in Palestine."

If convicted, Garaudy could face a one-year jail term and a \$50,000 fine.

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